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BUBER'S PERCEPTION OF JUDAISM, ITS CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT.

G.B. Phillipson.

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## R é s u m é.

The thesis enquires into Buber's concept of Judaism and his self-understanding as a Jew. Scholars in the field have been concerned with many aspects of Buber's dialogical philosophy but except for articles written from the point of view of Jewish orthodoxy, no in-depth work has been produced specifically examining the nature of his Judaism. The thesis draws out neglected and misunderstood aspects of Buber's thought and aims to conclude that his understanding of religious experience and life is profoundly Jewish. That is to say, his perception of what is essential to Judaism and to Jewish religious experience and life draws on the same (traditional) sources as orthodoxy and maintains Buber within a specific Jewish continuum.

Consequently while the influences on Buber's developing thought are carefully examined the emphasis of the argument is on Buber's understanding of God and revelation, and of the nature of man's responsibility. These are considered after an examination of the I-Thou/I-It word-pairs which represent the attitudes associated with Buber's dialogical philosophy. The problems concerning Buber's belief that law cannot be a part of the content of revelation, and the subsequent issue of his non-observation of mitzvot, are dealt with in depth. A parallel emphasis is given to Buber's involvement with Zionism, his work for Jewish communities in Germany before and during Hitler, and his continual work for Arab-Jewish rapprochement both in Palestine and after the establishment of the Israeli state.

It is by an analysis of the inextricable relationship between Buber's thought and practical work that the argument of the thesis establishes the reasons why Buber's self-perception is valid in terms of Jewish religious belief and life.



## NOTES.

1. For technical reasons I am unable to use italics and instead use bold-type. Where words in bold-type appear in quotations either italics were used in the original text or I have indicated the emphasis myself. In the latter case I acknowledge this.
2. All titles of books and journals are underlined, as are foreign words. In the end chapter notes essays or articles taken from books and journals appear in inverted-commas.
3. For the sake of clarity in the end chapter notes, only the sources, together with authors, editors and translators are given. Publishers, and the publishing history of various editions of books is confined to the Bibliography.
4. In the bibliography I have given the German names only of those books I have used in German. Thus other German primary sources are indicated as an edition of a translation of the original German text.

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BUBER'S PERCEPTION OF JUDAISM, ITS CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT.

G.B.Phillipson.

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

It is the purpose of this introduction to outline the place Buber holds both in the history of philosophy generally and more specifically within the tradition of the philosophy of Judaism. In the process of giving this outline I will indicate the nature of typical criticism to which Buber has been and is subjected indicating at which points I will argue against that criticism and amend it. This survey will provide the context in which I will then be able to state the aims of my thesis and describe the methods I will adopt in my endeavour to achieve those aims.

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Scholars have always found it difficult to categorise Buber's thought within the terms of reference of a specific discipline. Thus he has been uneasily placed within philosophy, sociology, theology and psychology. The consensus, with which Buber himself seems to be in accord, places him within the field of philosophical anthropology. Thus Buber understands himself to be the inheritor of a tradition which beginning with Aristotle and by way of, for example, Augustine, Bovillus, Cusa, Pascal, and Spinoza, lead to Kant (1).

The prevailing philosophical influence in which Buber developed his dialogical philosophy was determined for the most part, by the Kantian "Copernican revolution" and the neo-Kantian schools emanating from it (2). In general terms this meant that Buber was caught up in the currents of German Idealism and in specific terms by Kant's transcendental (or critical) idealism. I will examine this influence and its implications in Chapter 3, together with other significant influences. It is useful, however, to point out here that Buber was subject also to the reaction against Hegel, especially that represented by Feuerbach's anthropological reduction of Hegel, that is "the reduction of being to human existence" (3). Feuerbach was

concerned to humanise religion in the sense of understanding religion as man's consciousness of the infinite, indeed of the infinity of his own nature (4); religion and its concerns are thus given an entirely anthropological interpretation. Since Buber acknowledged that he received a "decisive impetus" from Feuerbach (5), I shall subsequently examine that influence more closely.

While Buber's philosophy finds its focus in anthropology its character is generally accepted as being existentialist. Kierkegaard is popularly regarded as being the initiator of modern existentialism, although some of its ideas have a longer pedigree the more recent aspect of which is associated with philosophers such as Pascal, Descartes and Hamann. I will consider Buber's response to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche in the relevant sections of Chapter 3. Buber's existentialism reacts strongly against the nihilistic "death of God" philosophy deriving from Nietzsche; nor can he accept Heidegger's attempts to avoid this by postulating the notion that real or authentic existence finds its ground in the individual's relationship to his own being. It is also to be pointed out that Buber's thinking is markedly different from the French tradition of existentialism which has its roots in its German parallels. Sartre and Camus developed what might be termed an existentialism of the absurd, which is anti-theist in character and in its understanding of concepts such as freedom and responsibility is, in comparison to Buber's emphasis on, for example, free and creative choice, negative and pessimistic. For the purposes of this summary we can consider that Buber's thought is typical of a life-affirming, theistic and constructive existentialism; that is, while he is concerned with keeping man at the centre of his enquiry, in so doing he gives precedence to the problem of being over that of knowledge. He is primarily concerned with the meaning of persons in relationship, with self-awareness and with understanding existence in terms of the activity of will and the

significance of choice. Consequently notions such as individual potential, freedom, and more importantly, the nature of experience, feature in his writings and with each of these themes I will be concerned in the following chapters. The notion of "experience" will emerge as being of particular significance. Buber makes a differentiation between Erlebnis, that is, a lived, or inner experience, and Erfahrung which is concerned with practical knowledge (6). The distinction Buber attempts here is important since it endeavours to guard against the problems of subjectivism. However, I shall endeavour to argue that in the course of this "radical self-correction" (7) Buber did not entirely succeed in passing beyond Erlebnis to safer, more objective ground and that this has important implications for an understanding of his self-perception.

Buber's dialogical philosophy is expressed succinctly in the word-pair locutions that have become so well known, "I-Thou," and "I-It." An analysis and criticism of this centre of Buber's thought occupies Chapters 6 and 7 of my thesis. It is my purpose here simply to sketch out the meanings of these locutions and to introduce something of the nature of the problems they involve. However, before I do it is necessary to establish that while it is Buber who has made a wide public familiar with the terms "I" and "Thou", they do not originate with him. I have already referred above to the "impetus" Buber derived from Feuerbach and his acknowledgement of Feuerbach's use of these terms. How he used them, and in what way Buber criticised and modified that usage, will concern me in Chapter 3. While Feuerbach's work was published in the middle of the nineteenth century, that of Ferdinand Ebner was contemporary with Buber. There are striking similarities between Ebner's and Buber's use of the terms "I" and "Thou" (8). Ebner published Das Wort und die Geistigen Realitäten a year before Buber's Ich und Du appeared in 1921, and in view of the fact that it is known that Buber read it, there is some controversy as

to the extent of the influence of Ebner on Buber.

I turn now to a description of Buber's use of his dialogical locutions and in so doing I wish to make an emphasis, the significance of which I will argue, has received inadequate treatment in the major works on Buber. The matter is made clear in Buber's opening statement in Ich und Du:

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks. The one primary word is the combination I-Thou. The other primary word is the combination I-It (9).

I-Thou represents the interpersonal element in the meeting between man and man, but the matter is complicated because Buber would not wish to limit this to human relationships but includes God and objects of nature. It is in this category that the individual can hope to enjoy true mutuality. "I-It" represents the attitude man might have to anything he merely experiences and uses; the category is concerned with common experience, it represents the attitude of scientific enquiry and consequently lacks the conditions of mutuality Buber expects of "I-Thou" encounters. The attitude "I-It" may refer to other people, animals and even to God. If man confines himself simply to the attitude of "experiencing", he will remain within the terms of reference of "I-It," wherein the content of the external world is only "object," and as such this experienced world remains completely passive (10).

The primary words signifying the two alternative attitudes create a constant tension within which man must live. It is a tension caused by risk, and by insecurity. The risk concerns the ever present possibility that the "Thou" can become an "It," indeed Buber sees this as inevitable since it "is the exalted melancholy of our fate that every Thou in our world must become an It" (11). But the converse is also true; that is, the potential exists all the time for the "It" to become a "Thou," for, as Buber states poetically, "the It is the

eternal chrysalis, the Thou the eternal butterfly" (12). It is seen, therefore, that the attitudes are in themselves a potency, they can transmute the world man inhabits so that a man might enjoy mutuality with another person or with God, or with God by means of another person; he might enjoy a meeting with the Thou of a natural "thing" or animal, or might alternatively miss all of these potentials, seeing people as objects, as things in nature to be experienced along with all other things.

The neglected emphasis indicated above concerns Buber's clear and leading indication that the word-pairs are primarily concerned with attitudes as distinct from the ontological implication of the "I" which operates in both pairs. Obviously the attitude cannot exist apart from the "I" which gives expression to it. It thus becomes a matter of emphasis, but where the emphasis is placed is of importance. Discussion of the nature of Buber's "I/Thou" and "I/It", and the relationships they represent, usually fall into two general patterns. The first concerns an examination, in Kantian terms, of the ontic status of the separate particulars that enter into this relationship (13), and the epistemological questions contained therein. This kind of discussion has its place within the familiar and broader context of subject-object relations. The second concerns an examination more specifically from the point of view of intersubjectivity and the problems this contains. This approach emphasises the absolute, or perhaps better, the ultimate implications of Buber's I/Thou locution where the "Thou" is identified as God or, in Buber's term, "the Eternal Thou" which as Berkovits suggests makes of our daily meetings with others "so many stations on the road to the ultimate encounter" (14). Obviously, these two differing and general approaches to an examination of Buber's "I" and "Thou" cannot be entirely separated, but since in my example each approach is concerned with the same theme, that is with Buber's theory of knowledge, it illustrates the



importance of the differing emphasis.

The point of this illustration is to indicate the context in which I will argue that Buber's self-perception resides more specifically in his understanding of attitude than in the status he gives to the "I" in both of these locutions and to the "I's" functioning in both aspects of these relationships. I will try, in progressing this argument, to define the notion of attitude in a way that does justice both to Buber and to the criticism levelled against him.

I wish to make two further points at this stage. Firstly, there is a built-in problem in the opening statement of Buber's mandate. Buber, throughout his writings, is concerned with unity but in this statement he acknowledges a dualism which he considers has ontic significance, that is, the nature of man's being is somehow seen to have a dualistic condition. Man's "twofold" attitude is predisposed to "see" the world as "twofold." The question arises as to the extent to which Buber understands this dualism as having reality, in the phenomenological sense, or as something that resides in our perception of the world which we receive merely as an appearance and thus has no reality in terms of things as they are. I shall consider the obviously Kantian nature of this question in the relevant section of Chapter 3. Whatever is decided as to the nature of the dualism in Buber's statement, will leave a further question to be answered: can that dualism be overcome, as Buber would require it to be, simply by a change of attitude? Secondly, I shall want to discuss another notion that figures largely in Buber's writing alongside that of unity; that is the notion of mutuality. I shall argue that there is both a relationship to be seen and a critical distinction to be made between these two concepts, and that the latter helps us considerably in the resolving of the problems concerned with the former.

\*

Apart from trying to establish Buber's place within the field and

history of philosophy generally, there is a second and more specific tradition within which Buber's work must be understood, and that is the history of Jewish philosophy. Because of the nature of Buber's thinking, establishing a clear place for him here is also problematic, since for example, with respect to Law and the content of revelation, he stands outside the history of orthodox Jewish thought. The extent of the problem can be seen from noticing that Buber finds no place in Guttman's Philosophies of Judaism, despite the fact that his colleague and fellow existentialist, Franz Rosenzweig, is the closing subject of the book's final chapter, "The Renewal of Jewish Religious Philosophy at the end of the Nineteenth Century" (15). This is a poignant and, in some ways, ironic exclusion when it is considered that it was to the renewal of Judaism that Buber dedicated his life. On the other hand, both Buber and Rosenzweig are considered in Altmann's survey of Jewish intellectual history (16). By way of illustrating the different yet typical responses to Buber of Jewish scholarship, it will be helpful to look at the possible reasons for his omission and inclusion by these authors, since the explanation will shed interesting light on their understanding of the nature of both philosophy and Judaism. At the same time we will see more clearly the problems involved in a discussion of Buber's contribution to a philosophy of Judaism.

Zwi Werblowsky, in his Introduction to Guttman's book, explains that the author is concerned with the philosophy of Judaism as opposed to Jewish philosophy (17). That is, it is Guttman's contention that Judaism is something that exists, and did exist, before such time as Jewish philosophers began to enquire into Judaism as given, in order to interpret and clarify it. It is this latter process which is Guttman's understanding of the task of the philosopher of religion who must start with some clear view about the nature of religion. For the moment, we can establish the marked differences in attitude of Buber, who endeavoured to make a critical distinction between philosophy and

religion. It will be important to my argument to show that this distinction was carried by Buber respectively to the concepts of knowledge and faith and the relationship between them. In Buber's thought the latter faculty becomes enhanced as a means for establishing what is valid and real in the context of experience. In terms of Judaism, I have indicated above in reference to Law and revelation that for Buber, nothing as touches revealed religion, can be accepted as given. This is the kind of attitude expected of an existentialist response, a response against which Guttman argued (18). Guttman and Buber were both pupils of the Neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen, who's influence on and relationship with Buber I will be concerned with in Chapter 3.

Altmann's terms of reference, on the other hand, are more specifically historical and documentary. That is, he aims in each of the essays in his collection to represent something typical of Jewish intellectual response to the period with which he is concerned (19). More than this, he is concerned to show that the best of Jewish philosophy arose, not as academic and intellectual exercises, but in reaction and response to what was happening within the cultures in which Jewish communities found themselves. For Altmann, Jewish philosophy is thus something which emerged as a necessary apologetic in the face, for example, of challenges from Hellenistic and Neoplatonic influences. What Altmann shows through his essays is a certain, and perhaps surprising, disposition of the Jewish mind towards openness and the ability to take from prevailing fashions of thought such as Jewish thinkers found useful in representing Judaism both to their own people and to those in whose countries they were living. There is much in this intellectual attitude that Buber would approve. His own attempts to provide Judaism with an adequate intellectual basis from which to respond to the challenges of his day, are evidence of his eclecticism and openness of mind. Altmann is

concerned to document the Jewish intellectual response in each of the historical periods he represents and consequently he is inclined to be descriptive rather than critical, and no judgements are to be found in his account of Buber's personal Jewish stance (20).

Between the extremes of these attitudes, that of total omission and that of a documentary and descriptive treatment, lies the full range of responses to Buber. There are those, who although conscious of the many problems Buber poses both for philosophy and Judaism, remain positive in their analysis, such as Ernst Simon and Walter Kaufmann; one has to look hard, however, to find real critical bite in Friedman's extensive works (21). On the other hand, there are those who are avowedly critical, such as Berkovits and Katz (22). These last can be considered to be representative of the kind of criticism to which Buber is subject. While the specific aspects of these criticisms relevant to my theme will be considered in the following chapters, it will be useful in this introductory survey to outline the main drift of them. I do so, to highlight both the nature of the problems confronted in an analysis of Buber's work and the atmosphere of concern in which such a task is undertaken.

Berkovits' concern is that there exists neither a philosophy nor a theology of Judaism which can do justice within our period,

to the essential nature of Jewish teaching about God, man, and the universe, as expressed in the classical sources of Judaism, nor one that can be maintained with contemporary philosophical validity (23).

Judaism is thus looking for a reformulation of its philosophy and theology that will meet these demands. Berkovits, however, imposes on those authors he discusses, what he considers to be the essential basis and criteria of such reformulation, that its creative energy will be drawn from classical Jewish sources, namely, the Bible, Talmud and Midrash. Why, in Berkovits' view, is Buber found wanting? Firstly, because his formulation of a dialogic implies a kind of free association between man and God in partnership which places Buber

"outside the historically authentic Jewish tradition" (24). Put simply, this means that Buber understands Jewish history as recorded in the Bible and subsequently, to be an ongoing dialogue between heaven and earth, more specifically between man and God. The implication is that the reality of such encounter remains entirely subjective. There is no received tradition against which an individual's understanding and practice of Judaism can be measured, and which can remain inviolably above such reconstructions as might be based on individual experience and interpretation. On this issue, Berkovits' criticism is to be placed within the already mentioned anxiety about Buber's subjectivism. Further, Berkovits argues that in Buber's description of the "Thou" as encountered between people, there can be recognised that same Thou in an encounter with the Divine, and that consequently he stands closer to Christian tradition than to Judaism; this needs more precise pointing. Berkovits argues that Buber's application of his primary-word pairs needs a much more careful distinction to be made between the nature of the "Thous" to be encountered. He considers that Buber has barely overcome Kierkegaard's problem for whom God can become so personal that another human being can stand between an individual and God to the point of confusing the two identities. (See my discussion of Buber's criticism of Kierkegaard in Chapter 3). Berkovits concedes that in Buber's thinking the two "Thous" do not necessarily exclude each other but argues that the distinction is maintained not by a humanising of God, but of a near deification of the subject of the relationship with the result that in this critical meeting with the other something of the "charms of personal identity" are lost (25). I shall want to argue however, that Berkovits' criticism on this aspect of Buber's thought is based on a misconception of Buber's understanding of the notion of mutuality in such encounters, and that in pressing his models for those encounters on biblical precedent, Berkovits claims more for them than does Buber

himself. I shall be concerned with this theme in Chapters 6 & 7. Nevertheless, there is a mediatory implication in Buber's development of this concept and Berkovits was not alone in suggesting that the potential for identity between Buber's "Thous" can be understood as being characteristic of the Christian tradition. Buber's appeal to, and influence on Christian scholars is well documented (26).

The criticisms of Buber by Katz are also grounded in a concern for the state of contemporary Jewish thinking. Katz tells us that "philosophical truth develops through criticism" (27) and that the main purpose of his book is to examine the extent to which, and the way in which, well established works of modern Jewish thought can be claimed to be true. He sees this task as urgent since he is,

certain that many of the most widely circulated and deeply held opinions found in the body of modern Jewish philosophy are inadequate, if not false (28).

He offers his criticisms, as it were, en passant, in process of working on his own programme of reconstituting a Jewish philosophy (29).

I am again intending here, only to sketch the general but main aspects of Katz's criticisms. Much of the detail will be taken up in the relevant discussion in the following Chapters, for example, in my discussion of Buber's dependence on Kant in Chapter 3, and in my account of his interpretation of Hasidism in Chapter 5. These two subjects reflect in themselves the principle concerns Katz has about Buber's work, namely, his epistemology and what he considers to be Buber's misuse of Hasidic sources. It is significant that Katz feels the need to begin by justifying his separation of these two aspects of Buber's work. In so doing, he recognises at the outset the problem encountered by all readers of Buber and to which I referred at the beginning of this introductory survey, namely, how to place him in a specific academic discipline. Katz overcomes the problem by identifying those works he considers to be philosophical, such as Ich

und Du, and The Knowledge of Man, thus allowing him to expose Buber's philosophical weaknesses. He is then left with other material which he considers not to be philosophical, such as Buber's biblically based and Hasidic works, which he examines from the point of view of hermeneutics. All this seems sensible in so far as it goes. However there are general and specific problems which need to be considered. In his criticism of Buber's epistemology, Katz's technique is to undermine Buber by pointing out the flaws and weaknesses of Kant on whom he takes Buber to be entirely dependent. I will argue in Chapter 3, that despite this dependence and the problems of being a Kantian in the modern period, Katz, in a way critical to an understanding of Buber's epistemology, has himself misrepresented Kant. Further to this, I will argue in Chapter 7, that Katz has made unwarranted assumptions about Buber's intentions in his use of Hasidic sources. These amendments to what is typical of the best of Buber-criticism, will make a significant contribution both to my analysis of Buber's self-perception and to the sources from which he derived his Jewish awareness and the energy for its rehabilitation.

\*

I come now to the objectives of my thesis and the methods I will use in trying to achieve them. I intend to enquire into Buber's Jewish self-perception with the purpose of reassessing its nature in the light of those aspects of his thought which I will argue have either not been given full consideration or have been misrepresented. This will necessitate two lines of enquiry. The first will be concerned to re-examine the philosophical basis of Buber's work and the nature of the foundation it provides for his thought. Secondly, I shall examine the basic building-blocks Buber used in the process of rehabilitating a Judaism about which he was disillusioned early in life. I wish to make clear that the reference in the title of the thesis to "development," does not imply a systematic examination of the

chronological unfolding of Buber's thought. This has already been thoroughly researched. What concerns me are the basic elements Buber used in the process of finding his way, firstly to a committed Jewish identity and secondly, to a committed faith in Judaism as an "inner reality." The former Buber achieved by way of Zionism and the latter by way of his rediscovery of Hassidism, but the emergent synthesis was very individualistic and presents a deeply personal perception of Judaism. In my examination of this perception I will lead towards an analysis of the way in which Buber found Judaism as a received tradition to be inadequate to meet the needs of individual Jews and Jewish community. I will also examine what he believed he had to offer to the central concern of his life and work, namely his concept of Jewish renewal.

Concerning the philosophical basis of Buber's thought, several ideas I shall want to develop have already been touched on in the survey above. In summary they concern, i) the Kantian basis of Buber's thought and other significant influences, in discussion of which I shall want to emphasise the implications of the difference Buber endeavours to maintain between knowledge and faith. ii) I shall examine Buber's distinction between philosophy and religion, a distinction which impinges on his understanding of experience. iii) In my analysis of Buber's use of the primary locutions, "I-Thou" and "I-It", I shall endeavour to show the full weight Buber intends for the notion of "attitude." iv) I intend to examine Buber's ideal of unity in the light of the problem of duality implied in Buber's statement of the twofold nature of man's attitude. I shall endeavour to show that a solution to this problem resides in his concept of "mutuality."

Buber's self-perception as a Jew is complex. One of the reasons for this is certainly to be found in his childhood and adolescent experience which I will discuss in Chapter 2. From these early days certain aspects emerge as being significant. There is, for example,



the effect on Buber of his mother's abandonment of the family home. Friedman is convinced that the loss of his mother was the decisive experience of Buber's life and the source of a deep insecurity. It was an experience, "without which neither his early seeking for unity nor his later focus on dialogue and on the meeting with the 'eternal Thou' is understandable" (30).

Further to this, I will need to consider the atmosphere of Haskalah, that is, "enlightenment," which was characteristic of his grandparents' home. Attitudes established under this influence undoubtedly determined his approach to an understanding of Judaism generally, but specifically of its classical sources, and his eventual interpretation and translation of the Bible. It was also from these early days that Buber recalls his first and impressionable experience of a Hasidic community; his later study of the subject lead to his appeal to the Hasidic example of authentic Judaism, without which he concluded there could be no true renewal. Also originating from his childhood experience of his father's farm, is one of the most problematic aspects of his thought which involves a panentheistic understanding of creation and man's relationship to nature, which I will argue retains elements of mysticism. Finally, I shall want to consider the nature of the German-Jewish synthesis Buber began to establish from his student days onwards and to argue that the self-perception so derived was later to colour his identity as an Israeli citizen.

Buber's commitment to Jewish renewal was occasioned by his concern for both the state of current Jewish thinking and the socio-political circumstances in which the Jewish communities of Germany and eastern Europe found themselves towards the turn of the century and subsequently. What he attempted intellectually can be seen to be motivated by similar concerns mentioned in respect to Berkovits and Katz above. Thus, Buber's re-interpretation of Judaism and his work

for the education of Jewish people was in the face of the challenges confronting Jews of his own generation, such as, religious apathy, the temptations of assimilation and the extreme nature of mounting anti-semitism. In what respects did he then find the orthodox Judaism of his day inadequate to provide his Jewish contemporaries with the resources sufficient to meet their needs? I shall endeavour to answer this question in Chapter 8 and at the same time I will be concerned to present in what way Buber believed his own perception contained the necessary ingredients for an urgent renewal of Judaism.

As suggested above a substantial foundation for Buber's emerging perception of what it meant for him to be a Jew was formed from two principal sources, namely Zionism and Hasidism. Buber's involvement in the political aspects of Zionism was unfortunate and lead to a fundamental controversy with Herzl, from which Buber emerged seriously disillusioned (see Chapter 4). It has to be said, and thus I will argue, that Buber was subject to a certain negative attitude to politics; add to this an uncompromising idealism and some degree of political naivety and it will be possible to understand the failure of his attempts to have the Zionist Congress accept his mandate for cultural Zionism. However, I shall want to show that while in one sense Buber never recovered from his political disappointment, his conception of Zionism remained a fundamental ingredient in his Jewish self-perception. This conception was biblically based and founded in his understanding of the nature of Jewish history. It involved Buber's understanding of nationhood and of the significance of "blood", as well as his interpretation of the concepts of covenant and election.

Buber's study and interpretation of Hasidism contributed fundamentally to his emerging self-perception and to a considerable degree sustained that perception throughout his life. I have already mentioned the controversial implications associated with Buber's use of Hasidic sources and will examine these in Chapter 5. I shall try to

argue that despite the fact that this criticism is well founded, it has to be mitigated by a consideration of Buber's declared intentions. Further, I shall want to show that those aspects of Hasidism he considered indispensable to a renewal of Judaism are another instance of where Buber retains elements of a mysticism which he claimed to have left behind.

Much will depend on what is decided about the nature of Buber's understanding of Judaism based on his interpretation of texts, whether those of classical Jewish sources or those of Hasidism. The point from which this enquiry will be made is his self-perception per se. His dialogical philosophy, pivoting as it does around a concept of the "I" draws heavily on his perception of himself and his understanding of subject-object relationship.

## Notes for Chapter 1.

1. Buber, Between Man and Man, pp126f.
2. Neo-Kantianism represents a wide variety of philosophical movements expressive of Kant's influence. They were concerned i) to free his system from error and inconsistency, and ii) to develop it further in the light of new mathematical and scientific discoveries. All agreed to some extent with Kant's aim to synthesise empiricism and rationalism. It was the Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism, through Hermann Cohen with which Buber became most involved. See my discussion of his controversy with Cohen in Chapter 3.
3. Buber, Between Man and Man, p147.
4. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.IX p222-223.
5. Buber, Between Man and Man, p148.
6. Buber, "Replies to my Critics" The Philosophy of Martin Buber, Edited by Schlipp & Friedman, p711-12.
7. *ibid.* p712.
8. Friedman is concerned to distance any possible direct influence from Ebner's Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten, The Word and the Spiritual Realities, 1921. Buber himself explicitly denied any influence. See "Epilogue", The History of the Dialogical Principal, 233f. Rivka Horwitz asserted that Ebner did have a strong influence on Buber and Friedman considers the case in Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I pp408-410. Since, because of illness, Ebner was not able to develop his thought, the extent of any influence must remain speculative.
9. Buber, Ich und Du, p3
10. *ibid.* p3-6.
11. *ibid.* p16.
12. *ibid.* p17.
13. See for example, Katz, Post-Holocaust Dialogues, p17f.
14. Berkovits, Major Themes in the Modern Philosophies of Judaism, p71. And see for example, Levinas, "Martin Buber's Theory of Knowledge," in The Levinas Reader edited by Sean Hand, p59f.
15. Guttman, Julius, Philosophies of Judaism, pp397f.
16. Altmann, Alexander, Jewish Intellectual History, pp278-82, for Buber, and pp246-65 & 282-86 for Rosenzweig.
17. Guttman, *op. cit.* Introduction ppviii-ix.
18. Guttman, "Existence and Idea: Critical Observations on the Existentialist Philosophy," in Scripta Hierosolymitana, Vol. VI, 1960. First published in Hebrew in 1944.
19. Altmann, *op. cit.* Preface ppix-x.

20. *ibid.* pp246f.

21. See Simon, "Martin Buber and German Jewry", The Leo Baeck Year Book III, pp3-35, Kaufmann, "Introduction and Notes" to his translation of Buber's Ich und Du, Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I-III.

22. See for example, Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, pp68-137, Katz, Post-Holocaust Dialogues, pp1-93.

23. Berkovits, *op. cit.* Foreword, pvii.

24. *ibid.* p136

25. *ibid.* p137

26. See for example Paul Tillich, "Martin Buber and Christian Thought," Commentary, Vol 5.6 June 1948. Tillich offers three reasons for Buber's influence on Protestant Christianity. a) Buber's existential interpretation of prophetic religion, b) his re-discovery of mysticism, and c) his understanding of the relationship between a) and culture in the social and political realms. See also Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, the detailed note p162 and his discussion of Buber's influence on Barth, p274. Also, for more contemporary interest see, H.J. Paton, The Modern Predicament p162f. and John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p208f., pp221-24.

Probably the main spring-board for this influence, which may also be one of the reasons why Buber finds disfavour in some Jewish opinion, is his testimony to the effect that ,

from my youth onwards I have found in Jesus my great brother. That Christianity has regarded and does regard him as God and Saviour has always appeared to me a fact of the highest importance which, for his sake and my own, I must endeavour to understand. My own fraternally open relationship to him has grown ever stronger and clearer.

(Buber, Two Types of Faith, Foreword p12.)

Undoubtedly Buber's appeal to Christian scholars is due to more than his "fraternally open relationship," to Jesus. It must also be due to the fact that his dialogical philosophy can be taken over and presented as a model for ideal, or idealised, relationships in the context of realising their temporal and eternal potentials.

27. Katz. *op. cit.* Introduction pix.

28. *ibid.* pxii.

29. *ibid.*

30. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol 1. p5.

## 2. SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS ARISING FROM BUBER'S BACKGROUND.

Buber was always something of a private man. He, and subsequently his family, omitted anything that seemed to be too personal from the publication of his Briefwechsel published in three volumes between 1972 and 1975 (1). Apart from these sources there exists only one other writing in which Buber talks at all about his childhood and subsequent development. In 1960 the Kohlhammer edition of Begegnung: Autobiographische Fragmente, appeared (2), in which he wrote,

It cannot be a question here of recounting my personal life (I do not possess the kind of memory necessary for grasping great temporal continuities as such), but solely of rendering an account of some moments that have exercised a decisive influence on the nature and direction of my thinking (3).

Thus, Begegnung, although really a small collection of anecdotes, must be included in the process of trying to understand his thinking since Buber himself considered them to be significant.

Buber was born in Vienna in 1878. At the age of three he went to live with his grandparents in Lemberg (now Lvov) as a result of his mother disappearing without trace. It was of this experience he coined the word Vergegnung - mismeeting, to heighten the failure of real meeting implied by Begegnung. When he was not yet four years old he met, on the balcony of his grandparents' home, the teenage daughter of neighbours who told him his mother had left for good. Twenty years later when he met his mother again, Buber noted;

I could not gaze into her still astonishingly beautiful eyes without hearing from somewhere the word, 'Vergegnung' as a word spoken to me. I suspect that all that I have learned about genuine meeting in the course of my life had its first origin in that hour on the balcony (4).

Certainly the disappearance of Buber's mother seemed to the child like a personal rejection. But his relationship with his grandparents must have helped the growing boy over this trauma. Ironically, Buber received in his grandparents' home a far more settled and orthodox Jewish upbringing than he would have received in the home of his father. Until the age of ten he was educated

entirely at home by his grandparents and by private tutors, with an emphasis on the humanities and languages. The German language predominated in the home, Polish in the streets and at school, Yiddish in the Jewish quarter and Hebrew in the synagogue. By the time he returned to live with his re-married father at the age of fourteen, "Buber spoke German, Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish, English, French and Italian and read, in addition to these, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Dutch and other languages (5).

The earliest religious influence on Buber came from his grandfather Solomon (1827 -1906) who was one of the leaders of the Lvov Jewish community, "honoured near and far by Jews of every branch of Judaism, even by the zealots among the Mitnagdim, - the opponents of Hasidism - and by the Hasidim of Belz and Zans" (6). His grandmother, apart from conscientiously running her home, was able to indulge her own intellectual interests, especially literature and language, in what Buber called "the authentic word that cannot be paraphrased" (7), from which he says "I learned even before I was fourteen what it means really to express something" (8). He makes an interesting distinction between his grandfather's feeling for language and his grandmother's feeling for the "genuine word."

My grandfather was a true philologist, a 'lover of the word,' but my grandmother's love for the genuine word affected me even more strongly than his: because this love was so direct and so devoted (9).

The distinction Buber makes is between the kind of feeling one must have for the more formal uses of language, such as the work of translation, and the "word" that is exchanged between individuals in the normal course of their daily lives. The significance of the above reflection about his grandparents is intended to show that Buber, from his earliest days, was especially sensitive to those exchanges of words, (conversations) by which means the conversers might meet each other. The "genuine word" here referred to is concerned with the

spirit, indeed, "it is engendered by the spirit" (10), it is the "word" which effects the meeting of people, as distinct from the academic or philological application which is concerned with the expression and communication of ideas. It is, among other things, the understanding of this latter function of language that Buber was indebted to his grandfather.

In a letter to Solomon Buber in 1900, Buber wrote, "You have drawn forth and utilised treasures from the spiritual life of the Jewish past" (11). Since, in some respects the indebtedness Buber felt to his grandfather is not as fully developed by Buber's biographers, (notably Kohn and Friedman) as it might have been, it is worth considering what these "treasures" were.

Solomon Buber's academic interests concerned midrashic and medieval rabbinic literature; in both he developed a reputation as a leading scholar of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment (12). This movement gathered momentum from the mid-eighteenth century, typically under the influence of Moses Mendelssohn and his followers, who were known as, Maskilim. While Haskalah came to represent among certain sections of central European Jewish communities, a desire to break with the exclusiveness of Jewish life and to assume the language, dress and habits of those among whom they lived, the movement strictly understood is a period in Hebrew literature. Jewish writers broke away from the traditional patterns and rhythms of Hebrew, and adopted instead the forms of European secular literature. It is important to establish, then, that it was in the traditions of this movement that the young Buber was first introduced to the disciplines of textual study, analysis and translation. It seems that at a relatively early age, (probably from about nine onwards) he acquired a questioning attitude to the traditional interpretations of basic Jewish texts, especially those which his grandfather annotated and on which he wrote commentaries. Further to this, the young Buber would certainly have



been at least witness to the methods his grandfather used in the reconstruction of Midrashim that had been lost. It is worth considering, even if it is only speculation, the extent to which Buber recalled these earlier lessons when he later he applied himself to the interpretation of Hasidic tales and the translation of the Bible from Hebrew into German (See Chapters 5 & 8). More specifically, of the dozens of Midrashic editions published by Salomon Buber, there must have been some of particular and lasting interest to Martin, the most important of which were written while he was under his grandfather's roof (13). The texts and books forming his grandfather's library can then be counted among the treasures enriching Buber's earlier years; but also they must have included something of the techniques of translation and the principles of interpretation already referred to. It is also difficult to resist the notion, that under his grandfather's tutorship was initiated Buber's love of the Bible and his understanding of its significance and authority as a record of Jewish history which later he was to understand as a record of revelation itself (See Chapter 8).

At the age of fourteen Buber returned to his father's home, but his interest in scholarship and the work of Hebrew translation was still continued with his grandfather. Buber's father Carl, was a practical farmer and from the age of nine he went each summer to his father's estate. It was here, watching his father work with both plants and animals, that Buber first sensed the possibility and immediacy of relationship with nature as well as with people. The influence here "was of a different kind from that of my grandparents. It did not derive from the mind" (14). What seems to have been important for Buber, even at this early stage, was that his father's relationship with the things of the estate was not sentimental or even subjective. It was, in a sense, a "technique", a method of working in order to achieve the best results. As he went about the estate with

his father, Buber observed much that was to be concerned with his ideas of authentic contact, of true meeting. He saw, in the practical and business-like way his father went about his work, an example of a man in genuine contact with nature (15). And what was true for Buber's father of his relationship with the things of the farm was just as true of his relationship with his workers and those dependent on him.

In a special way the relationship of my father to nature was connected with his relationship to the realm that one customarily designates as the social. It was solicitude not in the ordinary, but in the personal sense, in the sense of active responsible contact that could rise here in full reciprocity (16).

It is worth referring briefly in this context to the much-quoted incident of the horse, which Buber encountered when he was eleven years old on his grandparents' estate. As he stroked the horse, it seemed the young Buber was taken beyond himself.

When I stroked the mighty mane it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, was certainly not akin to me, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself; and yet it let me approach, confided itself to me, placed itself elementally in the relation of Thou and Thou with me (17).

Of these earlier childhood experiences two things should be borne in mind. Firstly, they are recalled in later years and the language of recollection is romantic; and the recollections themselves, obviously highly selective, are most certainly idealised and the significance laid on them is done so with hindsight, almost it would seem to serve the purpose of exposing the foundations of later thought. But that is not to say that such autobiographical fragments fail to illuminate Buber's mind. They show, for example, a certain disposition to use language in a particular and sometimes difficult manner (see Chapter 6), and to expect something exceptional of relationships with people and with nature; they also show that disposition towards a respect for "things" that was later to prove of critical importance for Buber's distinction between the two attitudes indicated by "Thou" and "It" and the potentials these locutions suggest. But perhaps most importantly

the fragments of autobiography show a disposition to mysticism to which Buber later gave himself more fully, and which later still he claimed to resist completely. I shall question the extent to which that resistance was successful (see Chapter 5).

Perhaps the central perception of his adolescence, which remained with him to be developed in one of his major works, Ich und Du, is well-summarised by Friedman; Buber first sensed that,

the man who practises immediacy does so in relation to nature just as much to his fellow man - the 'I-Thou' relation to nature is a corollary of the 'interhuman' (18).

From his father's town-house in Lemberg Buber began to attend the Franz Joseph's Gymnasium where the working language was Polish. It was here Buber began to feel the cultural and national admixtures of what it meant to be a German-speaking Jew in Polish Galicia. Certainly what emerges from Buber's early student years is an awareness of the pluralistic nature of the influences bearing on him, expressed in nothing so much as in the range of languages to which he had access, although it was obviously the Polish-German-Jewish relationship that he now struggled to work out. Although German was the language of his home, he felt himself to be,

a Polish Jew, and though I hail from a family of pioneers of enlightenment, I was exposed to the influence of a Hasidic atmosphere in the impressionable period of my boyhood (19).

In this statement in the epilogue to the German translation of Gog and Magog (20), Ernst Simon points to three fundamental elements of Buber's childhood and youth; (i) an acknowledgement of his ethnic ancestry, (ii) the intellectual nature of his grandfather's home, and (iii) the fact of German being the daily language of that home as distinct from the Polish of the secondary school and the Yiddish of the Hasidic community (21).

The influence of this cultural and linguistic pluralism that led Buber to choose for his Barmitzvah address a text from Schiller's poetry instead of the Biblical portion for the Sabbath. Despite this,

Buber made an almost desperate attempt to practise the laws and ordinances. In a letter to Franz Rosenzweig in 1922 he described how on one Day of Atonement, he threw himself to the floor of the Great Synagogue in Lemberg during some of the prayers instead of simply performing the required obeisance (22). This period of excessive fervency was not sustained and Buber gradually moved to the other extreme, giving up his daily morning prayers and the use of phylacteries, until, being estranged from Judaism, he became increasingly drawn to German and to European culture in general. It was to be the challenge of Zionism that began Buber's Jewish rehabilitation (see Chapter 4).

It was as a precocious fourteen year old that Buber first read Kant. He tells how he had become terrified by his contemplation of space and time to the point where he considered suicide as the only way out of his anxiety. It was his reading Kant's Prolegomena which helped him over the crisis; yet equally significant is the fact that Buber's conclusion expresses a deeply Jewish insight:

At that time I began to gain an inkling of the existence of eternity as something quite different from the infinite, just as it is something quite different from the finite, and of the possibility of a connection between me, a man, and the eternal (23).

And by the time he reached university Buber had also discovered Nietzsche. Both these influences are examined in Chapter 3.

In 1896, at the age of eighteen, Buber became a student at the University of Vienna. His appetite for a range of subjects that took him far beyond his registered faculty of philosophy may reflect not just an avidity to learn everything but also some confusion as to what he might want to do with his life. Vermes notices that Buber attended lectures on a wide range of seemingly unrelated studies such as art history, literature, psychology, German studies, classical philology and economics (24). Hans Kohn adds to this early curriculum the interesting fact that Buber also studied psychology and psychiatry and

attended clinics (25). Whatever happened to be the current subject of the seminars he attended, Buber tells us that it was in the actual experience of learning that he first alighted on a notion that was to figure largely in his dialogical philosophy. It concerns what Buber understands as happening when true meeting takes place, namely that the encounter becomes charged with the spirit, which is mutually recognised "between" the persons involved;

Some seminars immediately exerted a strong influence: the master at times took part with a rare humility, as if he too were learning something new. All this disclosed to me, more intimately than anything that I read in a book, the true actuality of the spirit, as a 'between' (26).

There is here, a possible association with Rudolph Otto's use of the concept of the numinous which carries from the Latin numen its broader meaning, that is, the presiding power of the spirit (27). It is especially in this sense that I suggest a similarity between Otto's use of numinous and Buber's, "actuality of the spirit", and it is a similarity not taken up by previous writers. Friedman records conversations and correspondence between Otto and Buber, in which Buber acknowledges Otto's "profound understanding of the divine majesty in the Hebrew Bible" (28). But the possible parallel I have in mind here concerns not only the numinous as between God and man, but between man and man, the numinous energy of personality. However, on the concept of "between" Buber overlays an ontic quality which has no part in Otto's understanding of the numinous, which deriving from personality has psychological overtones Buber would wish to resist.

Yet another influence on Buber, seems to have come from the Burgtheatre, where, "it was the word, the 'rightly' spoken human word that I received into myself, in the most real sense" (29). He took from the theatre a sense of the possibilities of the directness of speech might have in everyday life, where one might perceive "the genuine spokenness of speech", and "sound becoming 'Each-Other'" (30), as if each meeting, each conversation, was a living drama in which

people might truly encounter one another.

To literature and to art and architecture, in all their forms, must be added Buber's record of the impression made on him by music, by Bach, no less. He claimed that while listening to Bach in Leipzig, "the ground-tone of my life was obviously modified in some manner and through that my thinking as well" (31). But how, he was unable to say. And perhaps in acknowledgement of the essentially abstract nature of music, he does not attempt to say in what manner the music touched him; he records simply that in the struggle to do justice to the problematic reality of human existence, "Bach helped me" (32).

Buber acknowledges a number of influences dating from his university years which include some of his teachers. These I shall examine fully in the following chapter. What Buber began to put together from these earliest years was a deep insight into the character of the Jewish-German mixture and the elements contributing to its make-up. This decisive influence on his own self-perception is fully considered in Chapter 9. It is, however, necessary to make some reference to this subject at this point.

In the first of his Speeches on Judaism, Buber refers to a problem of identity arising from the complex mixtures of culture and the need to overcome this problem;

We need to be conscious of the fact that we are a cultural admixture, in a more poignant sense than any other people. We do not, however, want to be the slaves of this admixture, but its masters (33).

Simon suggests that by the time Buber began his university education he was no longer a "Polish Jew" but more generally orientated. He emphasises the importance of understanding the German-Jewish, European-Jewish synthesis Buber achieved, saying that it was of formative importance for him (34). Certainly Buber was sensitively aware of the precarious nature of Jewish settlement in Germany even if he would not agree with the absolute implication of Nietzsche's claim:

"I have not yet met a German who was favourably disposed toward the Jews" (35). Strauss blames the weakness of liberal democracy in Germany for the situation in which indigenous Jews found themselves during the period leading to the Second World War (36). Whilst the Weimar Republic gave full political rights to the Jews, it was succeeded by a régime whose expressed principle was a hatred of Jews which became manifest in a policy aimed to bring about their annihilation. During the period which saw the seemingly inevitable development of this situation, Jewish response took many forms. On the one hand were the temptations of complete secular assimilation, the total negation of Judaism in its religious and national forms. On the other hand, and in complete contrast, was resource to "scientific Judaism," or Wissenschaft des Judentums, a policy, ascribed to Leopold Zunz (1794 - 1886) and which gathered momentum to the period with which I am now concerned. Put simply, its object and ideals were a study of Judaism in a scientific and thus objective manner, thus to present the Jew, and Jewish religion, both to assimilated Jews and to anti-semitic Germans. It was held that by meticulous study and research on the level of Wissenschaft, that Judaism could be presented in its true character. It was also held, for example by, Abraham Geiger, that Wissenschaft could provide a solid basis for the reshaping of Jewish theology (37).

It was believed that by means of one or other of the alternatives mentioned above, that the Jewish problem was solvable and until the collapse of the Weimar Republic that it had in fact been solved, in principle at least, by liberalism. The implication was that there were Germans of the Jewish faith just as there were Germans of the Protestant and Catholic Christian faiths or of no faith at all, and that the State should be neutral in the matter of the differences between the religious persuasions of its subjects. But this neutrality was far from observed as Herzl recognised in his brochure The Jewish

State, (c.1895) in which he wrote:

Who is the alien in a country only the majority can decide, for it is a question of might like everything else in relations between nations. In the present state of the world and probably for a long time to come might precedes right. It is useless therefore for us to be good patriots (38).

The problem stated here exactly defines the nature of the choices that were soon to face European Jews, especially those who considered themselves to be German. It was in the absence of an authority powerful enough to guard Jewish religious freedoms that, "a small minority of German Jews, but a considerable minority of German-Jewish youth studying at the universities, had turned to Zionism" (39). Buber was numbered among them. These problems of identity and loyalty and the answer offered by Zionism were to bring Buber into direct conflict with Herzl, a conflict that deeply influenced him (See Chapter 4).

It may be said that Zionism came into existence because there were those acutely aware of the limitations of liberalism. Buber's commitment was to cultural Zionism which aimed to hold the middle ground between the extremes of power politics and divine revelation, but lacked what Strauss calls the "sternness" of either (40). Buber's identity with Zionism was not primarily concerned with seeking a solution to the Jewish problem, but with seeking a radical renewal of Judaism itself. The settlement of Jewish people in their own land was an indispensable part of that radical renewal but Buber did not see such settlement as in any way contributing to a solution of the Jewish problem. Indeed, he was a passionate exponent of the belief that settlement in Palestine in terms of Herzl's political Zionism would exacerbate those very problems that the system endeavoured to meet. Buber expressed anxiety towards any merely human solution to the Jewish problem, especially if it is assumed that the establishment of a Jewish state heralds the arrival of the Messianic age (41).

While Buber's translation with Rosenzweig of the Bible, (see



Chapter 8) saw the culmination of his contribution to German culture, his Hasidic work has become of decisive importance for Jewish cultural history. Simon makes a comparison with Mendelssohn (42), up to whose time (early eighteenth century) the basic unity of European Jewry had been preserved. But at the time of Mendelssohn (1729-1786) the split began between the eastern and western Jewish communities. In what is obviously a generalisation he indicates the emergent and differing concerns of these two communities; the western with a concern for political and social recognition and the extent to which Judaism itself might have to be sacrificed to achieve it, the eastern with a concern for how best God might be served, either through the way of Hasidism under the leadership of the charismatic Zaddikim, or by way of the more traditional and rationalist Mitnagdim, who were led by an aristocracy of rabbinic scholars (43).

By and large, and allowing for the decline of Hasidism, this was the situation Buber inherited and the context in which he made his commitment to cultural Zionism and his "discovery" of Hasidic piety. To understand the dominating influence of Hasidism in Buber's early development, it is necessary here to refer back to a further experience in childhood, indeed to his first encounter with the Hasidic community at Sadagora, near his father's Bukovina estate. Buber was aware that the great age of the zaddik had passed:

There no longer lives in the present-day community that high faith of the first Hasidim, that fervent devotion which honored in the zaddik the perfected man in whom the immortal finds its mortal fulfilment. Even in these degenerate Hasidim there still continues to glow, in the unknown ground of their souls, the word of Rabbi Eliezar that the world was created for the sake of the perfected man (the zaddik), even though there should be only one (44).

Buber goes on to say that the world is in great need of the "perfected man" and that such a man "is none other than the true helper" (45). It is not fanciful to suggest that in this experience was laid down for Buber a kind of model which he spent the rest of his life trying to emulate. But while this Jewish model of the perfect man

assumed a personal dimension, he took from this first encounter two other ideas which were later to exercise his mind continuously. These concerned the nature of true leadership and true community.

When I saw the rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt, 'leader', and when I saw the Hasidim dance with the Torah, I felt, 'community'. At that time there arose in me a presentiment of the fact that a common reverence and common joy of the soul are the foundations of genuine human community (46).

Again there is the feeling of romanticism, even of nostalgia, for what Buber considered to be a bygone golden age of Jewish spiritual vitality. And yet in this recollection of his earliest perception of Hasidism he reads back into it an acknowledgement that in his more modern persona the zaddik is regarded not so much as the perfected man but rather as "the mediator through whose intercession the Hasidim hope to attain the satisfaction of their needs" (47). Furthermore Hasidism, Buber tells us, has become degenerate "the power entrusted to the zaddik has been misinterpreted by the faithful, and misused by himself" (48). Despite these obvious reservations Buber has been accused of idealising Hasidism, of misusing Hasidic sources, of ignoring its less savoury side, and of a degree of selectivity that itself is misleading. I shall discuss the subject of Buber's interpretation of Hasidism fully in Chapter 5.

Vermes describes Buber's marriage to Paula Winkler as a "fateful choice" (49). She was a rare woman in that she was a student, (still an unusual enough occurrence in 1899 to comment on), an intellect in her own right, an authoress who wrote under the male pseudonym of Georg Munk. That she was a Gentile must, in the eyes of Buber's more unyielding critics, have seemed to distance him further from his own roots, despite the fact that she adopted Judaism as her religion and with it assumed with her husband all of Judaism's concerns and causes as well as its problems. Buber's biographers, however, are unanimous in the opinion that Paula Winkler was of inestimable value and

assistance to her husband, providing him with a seemingly inexhaustible source of encouragement and security, as well as, at times, with a necessary and corrective realism. Perhaps the sum of it all lies in her ability to be all things to him, but most especially a person who finally filled the void created by his defecting mother. Shortly after their marriage, Buber wrote to his wife to say:

Everything else is too interwoven with anxiety and restlessness. Your letters are absolutely the only thing. Besides them, the thought, perhaps, that there is a mother in you, the belief that there is. Now I know: I have always and always looked for my mother (50).

The gradual process of Buber's Jewish self-discovery culminated in 1923 in the publication of I and Thou, and in Chapters 6 and 7 I will examine, among other matter, the extent to which that book contributes to an understanding of Buber's Judaism. Buber came by his Jewish self-perception in a gradual and progressive way but Vermes suggests that it can also be seen how it hinged on a critically important intuition which occurred long before the writing of I and Thou. This concerned:

his sudden understanding of the religiousness of Judaism, and specifically of its ancient belief that man is made in the likeness of God (51).

From these preliminary considerations there are certain points to be heightened; they concern, i) the influence of attitudes derived from the notion of Haskalah and their implications for Buber's hermeneutic principles and his interpretation of Jewish sources. ii) The consequences for his understanding of mysticism of his experiences on his father farm of "nature", and the implications of this for his concept of relationships.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2.

1. Buber, Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten, Vol. I 1972, Vol. II 1973, Vol. III 1975, Ed. Grete Schaeder.
2. Buber, Meetings. In the The Philosophy of Martin Buber, ed. P.A.Schlipp and M.Friedman, it appears as Autobiographical Fragments.
3. *ibid.* p17.
4. Buber, Meetings, p18.
5. Friedman. Life and Work, Vol. I. p8.
6. *ibid.* p11.
7. Buber, Meetings, *op. cit.* p20.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*
10. Buber, "Gleanings", Nachlese p157.
11. Friedman. Life and Work. Vol. 1. quoting Buber: Briefwechsel 1 # 11, p153f.
12. Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol.1 p1434 - 35.
13. Examples of these might have included what are considered to be the most important of his grandfather's commentaries; the Tanhuma, the Pentateuch (1885), the Midrash Tehillim, Shohar Tov, on the Psalms (1891) and Sifrei de-Aggadata, three Midrashim on Ester (1887). The dates of these indicate the young Buber was under his grandfather's roof. For a fuller account of Salomon Buber's work see the Encyclopaedia Judaica, Vol. I p1434-35.
14. Buber, Meetings, p22.
15. *ibid.*
16. *ibid.* p23
17. *ibid.* pp26-27.
18. Friedman. *op. cit.* p12
19. Buber, Gog and Magog, Epilogue to the German translation of the Hebrew original, (Jerusalem 1943), Fischer-Bücherei, Frankfurt a. M. September 1957. Translated by Ludwig Lewisohn under the title For the Sake of Heaven. Philadelphia, 1945, p234.
20. The Epilogue is not included in the English edition and I am grateful to Ernst Simon for the reference in "Martin Buber and German Jewry," in the Leo Baeck Institute Year Book III p3.5
21. Simon, *op.cit.* p3.
22. *ibid.*

23. Buber, Martin, "What is Man?" in Between Man and Man, Translated and introduced by Ronald Gregor Smith, p169.
24. Vermes, Buber on God and the Perfect Man, p12.
25. Kohn, Martin Buber, Sein Werk und Sein Zeit, p23.
26. Buber, Meetings, pp31-32. My emphasis.
27. Otto, Rudolph, Das Heilige, The Idea of the Holy, Pelican Books 1959. p22f.
28. Friedman, Life and Works, Vol.3 p86.
29. Buber, Meetings, p31.
30. *ibid.*
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.* p33.
33. Buber, "Judaism and the Jews" On Judaism. p19.
34. Simon, *op. cit.* p6.
35. Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Beyond Good and Evil #251. Penguin Classics p162.
36. Strauss, Spinoza's Critique of Religion, Preface p3.
37. Seltzer, Robert, M. Jewish People Jewish Thought, p593.  
I must point out at this stage, that Buber rejected this approach as not being valid for the renewal of Judaism or even for presenting, the essence of the Jewish faith. In its place, Buber was to establish grounds based on the validity of individual experience as being the only proper basis for living religion. I shall be concerned to examine this assertion in the following chapters.)
38. Cohen, Theodor Herzl, p92.
39. Strauss, *op. cit.* p4.
40. *ibid.* p6.
41. See my discussion of Buber's controversy with Hermann Cohen in Chapter 3.
42. Simon, *op. cit.* p11.
43. *ibid.*
44. Buber, Meetings p38
45. *ibid.*
46. *ibid.* p39.
47. *ibid.* p38.
48. *ibid.*

49. Vermes, op. cit. p13.

50. Buber, "Briefwechsel", Vol. I. To Paula Winkler. 25th.  
October. 1901. Quoted by Vermes, op. cit. p14.

51. op. cit. "Briefwechsel", Vermes, p15.

### 3. PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the principal philosophical influences on Buber. In the process of this I will discuss a) Buber's criticisms of them, b) certain criticisms of Buber, including my own, and c) those aspects of Buber's thought which emerging out of these influences, are significant for an understanding of his self-perception. The chapter will thus have five sections: i) Kant, ii) Feuerbach, iii) Nietzsche, iv) Kierkegaard and v) Two teachers: Wilhelm Dilthey and Hermann Cohen.

Firstly some preparatory discussion is needed.

In the introduction I outlined Buber's place within the field of philosophy and in particular philosophical anthropology and explained the terms of reference of this method of enquiry. It is in the context of his discussion of Kant's fourth question, "What is Man?" that Buber criticises Kant and provides the fullest account of what he understands to be the task of philosophical anthropology (1). I want firstly to outline what Buber requires of philosophical anthropology so as to indicate more clearly his objections to Kant, and secondly, to examine Kantian parallels with specific themes of importance to Buber's thought.

Buber requires philosophical anthropology to make enquiry into a full curriculum of man's affairs; to be concerned not just with generalisations about human species, but with people as groups in both community and nations; in terms not simply of life but of each of life's stages, and above all to concentrate on the nature and the functioning of the one as well as the many, so as to provide a clear and comprehensive vision of man's wholeness (2). To achieve this, "it must put man in all seriousness into nature," (3) and through a process of comparing man with other conscious beings arrive at a definition of man's special nature and special place. (It is to be

noted that the second requirement, namely that of putting man into nature closely parallels Hermann Cohen's Neo-Kantian concept of correlations which I will discuss later in the chapter.) Buber seeks to know man, and would hope that people might know each other, in a way which steps outside the rational-empirical synthesis Kant's thought represents. Buber's aim is not simply concerned with a totality of self-knowledge, but also to penetrate into the very sanctuary of the others knowledge of himself, so that an individual may, "at times even experience in his blood, when he is joined by choice to another human being, what goes on secretly in others (4). In the process of enquiry this involves, Buber understands philosophical anthropology to be concerned solely with knowing man himself. This is not to reduce the scope of philosophy merely to human existence, but to make that existence the proper point of departure for an enquiry into such matters as the nature of the cosmos, the meaning of life and the existence of God. In short, philosophical anthropology places man firmly at the centre of all enquiries, including that of metaphysics.

As I am concerned with Buber's self-perception, Buber's view of the aims of philosophical anthropology is important to my thesis, since he states that a philosophical knowledge of man is built up on the basis of man's self-reflection (Selbstbesinnung). Buber, presumably, applied to himself the principle he states, that,

man can reflect about himself only when the cognizing person, that is, the philosopher pursuing anthropology, first of all reflects about himself as a person (5).

Buber goes further; he states that everything we can discover about man, both historically and now, in all cultures, races and economic conditions, is founded on and made clear by what a philosopher discovers from self-reflection. In one sense, all philosophical enquiry must have its starting point with the person doing the thinking since he aims to understand and interpret the world as it seems to him. But many philosophical systems succeed in transcending



the personal point of view, both in their methods and their subjects. Buber, however, seems to remain within the anthropological terms of reference of his subject, using as the building-blocks of his thought what emerges from self-understanding. This leads him to attempt an understanding of the other through meeting with him, or as a consequence of true meeting, experiencing a degree of mutuality which implies a considerable, if not total, knowledge of the other.

The further question arises as to what extent the process Buber is describing, is philosophical at all, and not more properly understood as psychological. Throughout his work there are references to psychology and psychologists and essays specifically written within this field (6), but his attempts to keep the disciplines of psychology and philosophy apart are uneasy, especially when philosophy takes on its anthropological concern. In the context of this present discussion concerning self-reflection and the knowledge so acquired, Buber would argue that the psychologist puts together his data not just from self-observation and analysis, but from analysis of his clients, from literature, and from his observation of the world in general (7). At the most, these objective observations are refined and clarified by reference to himself. What Buber is implying here is that the psychologist, by virtue of his method, must inevitably reduce man to an It, to a mere subject of observation. In maintaining that degree of objectivity necessary to his usefulness to his client he will thus operate within the terms of reference of the attitude represented by the I-It locution. On the other hand, the philosophical anthropologist, in process of self-reflection, cannot really talk about data as such, since he is to be concerned only with the whole, concrete self, which can never be merely an object of knowledge, since his own self remains incomplete outside the context of the meeting with the other. Thus, for Buber, the attitude typical of the philosophical anthropologist is that represented by his I-Thou

locution. If the psychologist is successful to the extent to which he remains objective, for the philosophical anthropologist subjectivity is of the essence.

He can know the wholeness of the person and through it the wholeness of man only when he does not leave his subjectivity out and does not remain an untouched observer (8)

#### i) Kant.

It is exactly at this point where Buber considers Kant to have failed and where I can take up my discussion of Kantian-Buber parallels. Put simply, Buber considers that an addition of all Kant has to say about man does not amount to a description or understanding of man's wholeness. Buber argues that Kant does not achieve what he himself demanded of philosophical anthropology, namely an answer to the question he posed concerning man's nature. Instead he understands Kant to have been concerned with the limits and possibilities of human reason and experience, and what, in terms of knowledge, man is capable of apprehending (9). What dismays Buber is that in Kant's thought such questions as,

man's special place in the cosmos, his connexion with destiny, his relation to the world of things, his understanding of his fellow-men, his existence as a being that knows it must die, and so on - not one of these problems is seriously touched upon. The wholeness of man does not enter into his anthropology (10).

This is not altogether true and it seems that Buber is criticising Kant for failing in something he never intended to attempt, namely to pursue his enquiry within the terms of reference of philosophical anthropology. To ask the question, "What is Man?" and to attempt an answer does not of itself make philosophy into an anthropological enquiry, that is, the subject does not necessarily determine the character of the enquiry. As Buber realised himself, a comprehensive answer may require excursions into several disciplines; the problem then is to achieve a satisfactory synthesis of those disciplines and combine them in providing a successful answer. I shall be concerned at

several points in the following chapters to question the extent to which Buber was successful himself in achieving precisely this kind of synthesis. We must note also that Kant was very much aware of this problem. For example, in defending the territory of Logic, he points out that if an attempt is made "to enlarge its domain" by turning to psychology, metaphysics and anthropology, "we do not enlarge, but disfigure the sciences when we lose sight of their respective limits, and allow them to run into one another" (11). Kant is by no means suggesting that such an attempt is misguided and that all enquiry must remain within the narrow limits of its own field, he is simply warning us that in process of enquiring into truth, to make excursions between disciplines is fraught with difficulties of all kinds unless there is some clear, validating principle, which enables us to make correct judgements about the various branches of knowledge and indeed, knowledge itself (12).

The search for such a validating principle was one of the aims of Kant's Kritik der reinen Vernunft and stated in the question, "What and how much can reason and understanding, apart from experience, cognize?" (13) In his answer Kant concludes that neither reason nor understanding, nor yet, experience are able of themselves to provide knowledge; such is to be found only in the synthesis of these. Such knowledge is genuine and is not confined or dependent on the point of view of the person who makes claim to it; even so, what a person has is not knowledge of things "as they are", for it is impossible for our knowledge not to bare the marks of personal perspective.

What emerges is not that Kant failed to progress an enquiry into the nature of man, but that in so doing he came to different conclusions from Buber. Buber's dissatisfaction with Kant is more clearly seen by focusing on Buber's criticism that he fails to find in Kant an answer to his fourth question which treats man in his entirety. That is to say, man, for Kant, is an object of enquiry.

whose nature he proceeds to examine, and whose perception of the world he seeks to understand entirely from those aspects or faculties of man we identify as reason and experience, and the notion of understanding contingent on them. Thus according to Buber, Kant, whose method is analytic, is more concerned with these human faculties than with the person as a whole, and is more interested in how the human mechanism functions in the world by means of these faculties, than with the problems arising for man from the fact that it is in the world that he has to function.

On the matter of experience, for example, which is central to both philosophers, Buber understands experience as something which provides only superficial knowledge of its subject and must be transcended for real knowledge to be acquired. I will argue that Buber did not achieve this "overcoming" of Erlebnis. While Kant allows that experience will inform as to the nature of what is experienced, (for example, that objects are perceived as appearances) such perception must still be subjected to the scrutiny of reason. The image of man that emerges from Kant is thus of a being, basically rational but needing to accommodate to his perception aspects of knowledge which have their origin in experience as well as outside it. Man contains within his make-up basic a priori intuitions and concepts which reside in him and equip him to make moral and aesthetics judgements. Thus, we do not find in Kant, the image Buber has of man seeking fulfilment in relationship, and making moral and aesthetics judgements which have an ontic quality since they arise out of his being. However, I will argue that while Buber endeavours to give to man's sense of right action an ontological weight, he does not, in fact, succeed in freeing this sense from Kant's notion of necessity, that is from the compulsion of the oughtness implicit in Kant's moral imperative. Never-the-less, Buber's contribution is to place the dialogic at the heart of his own attempt to answer Kant's fourth question.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter Buber's first encounter with Kant came early in his life; Buber tells us that at the age of fourteen he was visited by a deep almost destructive anxiety caused by his contemplation of space and time. In his essay, What is Man?, written in 1938, he refers back to this period of his adolescence when he found himself hopelessly overwhelmed by his contemplation of space and time, identifying with Pascal; "le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie" (14). Having considered suicide as the only escape from what he believed to be a threatening madness he describes his reading of Kant as nothing less than "salvation" (15). What particularly impressed him was his reading of Kant's Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können. Here Kant makes general statements about space and time being forms provided by intuition, (Anschauungsformen) and thus merely representational;

Regarding space and time and, consequently, regarding all appearances in general, I have only shown that they are neither things (but are mere modes of representation) nor are they determinations belonging to things in themselves (16).

In fact Kant's views were originally and more fully expressed in Part 1 of his Kritik der reinen Vernunft (17) where the context concerns transcendental aesthetics. By "aesthetic" Kant intends the Greek meaning of the word, that is "sensation"; thus the context for Kant's discussion of space and time is the notion of sensibility, in contradistinction to understanding. The implication of this is that Anschauungsformen, being part of our mental equipment and the means by which we perceive, order our sensations according to spatial and temporal terms of reference. Space and time are therefore not concepts but are entirely subjective parameters within which we understand experience and by which means we order the world. This aspect of our perception (what Kant calls the form of the phenomenon), is always the same and is a priori in the sense of not being dependent upon experience. Along with space and time which Kant understands as being

a priori intuitions, there are also his twelve a priori concepts, which he calls "categories" (18). These are also subjective since they are presupposed in experience and like time and space are part of our mental make-up.

Clearly, Buber was relieved by the discovery that the notions of space and time had no existence in themselves being but a priori intuitions. This encounter with Kant coming as it did at a time of adolescent crisis was thus not only intellectual but involved deeply the boy's perception of himself and his existence; it was, "philosophy which confronted the catastrophic situation, delivering and helping" (19). Kant's present to him was "philosophical freedom" (20).

It is at this point that an understanding of Buber's self-perception and his dialogical philosophy must face the problems encountered by any Kantian-dependent system in a post-Euclidean and a post-relativity age. I want now to discuss these problems by reference to three specific subjects, a) experience, b) relationships and, c) Moral philosophy. As each of these are important for my subject, they will also remain part of subsequent discussion.

#### A. Experience.

An understanding of the nature of experience figures centrally in the philosophies of both Kant and Buber and I must now endeavour to summarise how each of them understood the term. We have already seen that the question arose for Kant as to where concepts originate which cannot be given through experience because they are presupposed in experience. His answer was to show the mind to be equipped with a priori intuitions and categories by which means we bring a kind of order to our perception of the world. What takes place, as Kant understands it, is a "transcendental synthesis" of concept and intuition which generates true experience (21). That is, what I apprehend from my point of view is not deduced from experience, but is

a presupposition of it. Yet it remains true that what I know is still only a description of my point of view, which nevertheless has the character of unity which my own consciousness has imposed on it. We must ask, does my description of my point of view carry over to being an accurate description of the objective world? Kant's attempted answer is contained in what he calls "the transcendental deduction" (22). It seems that here Kant takes a kind of leap across the subjective gap. On the one side we have the notion that everything is as it seems to us to be; on the other side we have the notion that one cannot hold the subjective point of view to be valid without knowledge of objective truths. The leap concerns Kant's assertion that experience itself exists in a categorical sense, so that the observer must himself be part of a world in which things can be other than they seem and can exist independently of a personal point of view. Kant is trying to demonstrate that the idea of experience already carries the objective references (which, for example, Hume's scepticism denied) of space, time and causality. Hence I bring to bare on my observation of my experience precisely those ordering factors which I bring to my perception of the world. If I then proceed to a description of my experience, what I am describing is an ordered perspective of a world independent of myself as experiencer. In this way, (the way of "transcendental idealism") Kant attempts to provide ground over which (and through time) the mind can move from the state of unity of consciousness to an identity with the subject. It is a shift which tries to establish the objectivity of my point of view by assuming that in my experience of my point of view I have at the same time, knowledge of objective truths. That Kant entirely re-wrote this aspect of his argument for the second edition of the Critique, indicates his own dissatisfaction with it but the reasons it appealed to Buber are important and interesting. In the next section I shall take up those reasons in the context of a discussion of his I/Thou,

I/It locutions. But before I do, it is necessary to say something now about Buber's own understanding and use of the notion of experience.

Experience was not, for Buber, the ground of knowledge, not even a ground for knowledge. It is easier to state this, than to extrapolate from Buber's thought what that ground of knowledge might be. It has to do, essentially, with what Buber called meeting, in the sense that true knowledge is a consequence of it. How and in what way meeting, in its many manifestations, is not a constituent of experience is elusive and the way to understand Buber on this issue, is to examine why he was suspicious of experience, as such.

The existentialist notion of "authentic existence" was transposed by Buber into a concern for authentic living, that is real living, and it is here that we find the first shift from Kant. For Buber being is more important than knowing. It follows then that while Kant was concerned to establish the validity of what, and in what way, the mind is capable of knowing, Buber was concerned to establish by what means the individual might be sure that the life as he lived it, was authentic, in the sense of deriving its meaning from an ongoing encounter with reality. The maxim which sums this up in its simplest form is, "all real living is meeting" (23). Everything revolves around the quality of the meeting, thus the authenticity of our living is determined by the nature of our daily encounters with other people, with the world (nature), and with God.

In this process it is the reality of the meeting with "the other" that is crucial for Buber, a reality which can be confused by the notion of experience precisely because experience can be engendered or even counterfeited. Experience for Buber, lacks the a priori ingredients that made it so useful for Kant and he would deny to it the categorical character described above. Buber contends that the content of experience can be determined by all manner of diverse and subjective considerations so that experience as such, is certainly no



guarantee and may not even be an indicator, of authentic living. In general terms there are two possibilities, either we bring to an experience that character which we want to find there, or and consequent on this, we claim such authenticity for the experience, that the experience itself becomes a substitute for the reality of the encounter in question. What happens, Buber argues, is that Erlebnis is concerned with "the exclusive, individualised psychic sphere", and consequently implies a "psychological reduction of being" (24).

Clearly this shift from Kant on the concept of experience is radical. It must be asked, however, is it a shift that places Buber on more substantial ground from which to argue the authenticity of being? We can understand Buber's concern for the problems implied by the unreliability of experience and we can sympathise with the reasons why he endeavoured to achieve, in Friedman's phrase, "the overcoming of Erlebnis" (25). However, I submit that Buber is really splitting hairs; it is one thing to be aware of the possible deceptions of experience, it is quite another thing to suggest that because of the dangers involved, experience itself should be, in some way, transcended. Buber is trying to guard against two dangers: the first is that the way of experience allows, for example religion, to be confined to special and precious moments of heightened reality, that is, to a mere refinement of ordinary moments; secondly, and obviously, Buber is aware of the charges of subjectivity levelled at highly individualised experience. However, to attempt to overcome the seemingly in-built difficulties of experience by disclaiming experience in favour of "the foundation of human reality" (26) only removes the problem to this latter sphere. Thus the most, it would seem, that Buber can attempt is to protect his notion of authentic living by warning against using the standard of experience as a measure of its authenticity. Still further, I would argue, that experience cannot be "overcome" as Buber would require, nor can it

even by-passed; it remains part of the mechanism through which man approaches man and the world and despite the problems of subjectivity, experience can itself be "authentic".

There is one further point to be noted in this shift from Kant. If Buber does not allow experience the a priori content suggested by Kant, in what sphere does Buber then place the terms of reference which allow us to measure the authenticity of our living? The criteria reside in the notion of "meeting" referred to above. That is, Buber gives to the reality of meeting those qualities of authenticity that Kant gives, in a priori terms, to the content of experience. In fact late in life, Buber indicated that he preferred to the term Begegnung, "meeting", the word, Verwandtschaft "relationship", precisely because he believed it avoided the temporal limitation implied in the former term (27). Since, therefore, it is the notion of relationship that carries the full weight of Buber's thought, I wish now to move to a consideration of this concept.

#### B. Relationships.

What is implied in the suggestion above, that Buber's ground for genuine living is relationship, is that he brings to the notion of the "person" the weight of a Kantian category. That is, for example, that alongside such notions as space and time, there resides in human consciousness the notion of "person" which predisposes us to expect of relationships something approaching ultimate significance. This potential, as indicated in my introduction, is centred in Buber's understanding of the "Thou" in the I-Thou relationship, and is implied in the I-It relationship since each "It" can be encountered as a "Thou." The converse, as we have seen, also true (28).

What I want to establish here, is that Buber argues in Kantian terms that the notion of "relationship" implies a fundamental category. For Buber, it concerns in addition the qualifying concept of "the between."

The view which establishes the concept of between is to be acquired by no longer localizing the relation between human beings. Between is not an auxiliary construction, but the real place and bearer of what happens between men (29).

In this process of meeting, man is not the subject but the expression of whatever meeting takes place; meeting (and thus the possibilities of relationship) reside in him as a priori. This is why I have suggested above, that "personhood" or perhaps better, "personality" (30) is also, in Kantian terms a category conceived as relationship. Self, for Buber, is not therefore an entity which exists independently. Self, is a relation which finds its authentic existence from its meeting with another self, perceived as a "Thou." The place Buber gives to self is therefore consistent with, and follows from, his assertion that it is Being that carries those qualities which authenticate living as "real." More than consistency is required, however, before we can decide if Buber's assertions have validity and there are certain problems involved which I will now examine.

Katz's thorough analysis of Buber's Kantian dependence and his conclusion that Buber fails because of the inadequacies of Kant, hinges principally on his assertion that Kant's,

transcendental deduction cannot be performed and that consequently this undermines the metaphysics of the Critical Philosophy as well as any subsequent philosophy which builds upon it, eg. Buber's dialogical metaphysics (31).

I have already noted the difficulty of this aspect of Kant's argument and his own uneasiness with it. It is not my purpose here to defend Kant against Katz's charge but rather to argue that Buber in important ways, is not dependent on Kant to the extent that Katz considers. Buber's dialogical philosophy can only be properly considered metaphysical in that aspect of the I-Thou relationship in which the "Thou" so encountered is understood by Buber to be God, or to use Buber's familiar term, the "Eternal Thou." This aspect of relationship I will consider separately (see Chapter 7). In the main,

my reasons for suggesting that Buber's shift from Kant is sufficient to establish a considerable degree of independence, have already been touched on or implied and can be summarised thus:

i) Buber is concerned with Being rather than with knowing. This places his dialogic within existentialist terms of reference which as well as breaking the bounds of Kant's empirical-rational synthesis, suggests an alternative basis for Buber's thought.

ii) Buber shifts the responsibility for "authenticity" from the notion of experience to the notion of meeting, which transfers the sphere of interest from something that takes place internally to an immediate and concrete happening. At the same time Buber retains the notion of reason as being the bridge between I and Thou. That is, what happens in the "between" at the moment of meeting and is understood in terms of relationship, is apprehended, not by feelings or emotions, but by reason. As indicated above, this gives both to the notion of meeting and to the notion of the person, the significance in Kantian terms, of a category, of something built-in to the concept of self. But the Kantian term category can only be used cautiously, even perhaps metaphorically, since Buber's application of it goes beyond Kant's terms of intelligibility.

iii) Important and fundamental differences exist between Kant's and Buber's understanding of the "knower." For Kant, the subject exists in some degree of independence and is already equipped with mechanisms which enable him to understand and to order the world. For Buber the subject "exists", authentically only in relationship, in which context he can both aspire to knowledge and validate the knowledge so acquired. For Kant, the knower is circumscribed by fixed limits to knowledge while having to accept that the sum total of what is real can only be ascertained on grounds other than reason. For Buber the limits in which the knower operates are not fixed at all but remain relative to the degree to which he fulfils the potential (and

responsibility) of relationship. It has to be pointed out that while for Kant the cognizer's perception of his own existence is qualified by the space-time continuum, for Buber the subject is and continues to be perceived as a being in relationship even when that continuum is understood as being only Anschauungsformen, or radically recast in terms of theories of relativity.

iv) Kant would assert that we cannot properly know ourselves, that is "pure self" as a thing in itself; we can, strictly speaking only have knowledge of objects and a person cannot be the object of his own enquiry. Kant understands the self as an intellectual abstraction, a focus which at best can only be imagined. This does not satisfy Buber and his adjustment of Kant is based on suggesting the idea of the "I" as a concrete conscious subject, and that self-knowledge is a precondition of the knowledge of the other achieved in genuine relationship.

These arguments, I submit, sufficiently distance Buber from Kant to put in question Katz's claim for Buber's total dependence on his system. There is a further important argument I will offer below, but first I have to establish that while I am concerned to examine questions raised by Buber's influence by Kant, the perception Buber finally achieved was the result of a synthesis which owes much to other influences and which drew on other sources. It is, therefore, unfortunate that in his analysis of Buber's epistemology, Katz fails to take cognizance of influences other than that of Kant. There is however another and equally important matter I want to take up from Katz.

He quotes Kant as stating: "I have destroyed reason in order to make room for faith" (32). The question arises as to the problems of translation; Meiklejohn has it, "I must, therefore, abolish knowledge, to make room for belief" (33). What is important is that Katz intends to imply that Kant admits to having destroyed the claims of Reason to

make room for the claims of Faith, but in so doing he misinterprets the spirit of what Kant has in mind. Katz's criticism contradicts Kant's stated intentions for the Critique as set out in the "Preface to the Second Edition" and in the "Introduction" proper. There is nothing in Kant's aims or methods which suggests the need to restrict knowledge for the sake of faith. Kant is not in the long line of philosophers from St. Thomas to Kierkegaard who denied or restricted reason in this way. Where there is a conflict between the two, unreasonable faith for Kant is not religious but something to be understood as superstition and characterised by over-enthusiasm (Schwärmerei). I suggest, in contradiction to Katz, that Kant's important statement means that theological positions are productions of pure reason in its moral function, not in its cognitive function. Hence we do not have knowledge in theological matters, but a faith which is, according to Kant, purely rational. What is of significance is precisely this point, that knowledge and faith differ in function. Kant explains (34) that human reason is subject to the fate that in one aspect of its knowledge it is challenged by questions which, while reason is not able to ignore, is unable to answer. It is in the context of this discussion that Kant makes the statement referred to above, that knowledge here must give way to faith, that is Glaube which can also be translated as "belief." This distinction is to be of importance in my future discussion of Buber's understanding of the function of faith/belief which will indicate a further radical shift from Kant, since Buber brings to this function the notion of trust, of emunah, which in distinction from pistis, suggests that it is grounded in relationship as opposed to an assent to something which is merely propositional.

I wish now to address the question of relationship as touches Buber's concept of the Eternal Thou which I will be concerned to discuss fully Chapter 7. Here I must refer again to Buber's adolescent

encounter with Kant.

At that time I began to get an inkling of the existence of eternity as something quite different from the infinite, just as it is something quite different from the finite, and of the possibility of a connexion between me, a man, and the eternal (35).

The "connexion" Buber refers to indicates the earliest seed of the relationship he later attempted to represent as the I-Eternal Thou encounter. It is clear from this statement that what Buber sensed was the reflective nature of eternity and time, that an awareness of one must be the echo of an awareness of the other and that it is in time that Buber considers man's relationship with the Eternal is to be made, that is, the relationship will be known as eternity's temporal presence. I am not concerned here with Kant's review of the traditional arguments for the existence of God (36) nor, in this context, with his notion that God is to be understood as the practical claim made on our wills by the "Good." I shall consider the implication of this latter idea towards the end of this chapter in my discussion of Buber's polemic with Hermann Cohen. Buber clearly and consistently disassociated himself with the "God of the Philosophers" and the Theologians (37). What Buber seems to have derived from Kant on this theme is more in the nature of a redirection of the way of approach to God as opposed to an enquiry about God. What Buber reacts to is Kant's assertion that the question of God's existence is a matter for "speculative reason" which postulates, for example, that if it can be shown that existence is perfection, it follows from the idea of God as an all-perfect being, that God exists. For Buber this remains merely and intellectual exercise. Questions are not to be asked about God, but only about our relation to him (38). Buber is concerned to make what he understands to be a radical correction of the method of speculative reason, in favour of practical reason. Inevitably we are again concerned with the tension already described existing between knowledge and faith where the latter, in Kantian

terms, must retain its grasp on reason. In Buber's terms, reason remains "the bridge" between I and all relationships, and potentially even that of the Eternal Thou. Kaufmann sums up the point thus:

True, the word "reason" is for Buber - in distinction from Kant the principal noun that goes with "perception," so that reason forms the bridge between I and Thou (39).

The context of Kaufmann's discussion is Buber's "meditative movement towards God" which he claims Buber "consciously pushes into the background" in favour of the more "reasonable" approach (40). What is implied here, although Kaufmann is not concerned to say so, is an adjustment Buber made at that stage of the development of his thought which marked a rejection of mysticism. The kind of rationality Buber attempts becomes an alternative energy, that is, the movement towards God shifts from the intellect to the will and with that change of emphasis is suggested an influence of Nietzsche rather than of Kant. I shall argue that despite his claims to have done so, Buber never manages a complete rejection of the mysticism that characterised his earlier thought.

### C. Moral Philosophy.

The argument I hope to develop under this heading will lead to conclusions concerning Buber's controversial attitude to Law. I hope to show that Buber retains from Kant the sense of obligation and duty which characterises the latter's notion of what constitutes imperatives. This concerns the idea of an objective principle, which compels the will. There are two forms of imperative; the Hypothetical Imperative, which indicates what it is necessary to do in order to achieve a particular result, and the Categorical Imperative which tells us that a certain kind of action is objectively necessary without regard to the end in question.

The two formulations of Kant's thought relevant to this discussion are well known: The first states;



Act only according to a maxim by which you can at the same time will that it shall become a universal law (41).

And the second states that I must,

so act as to treat humanity, whether in my own self or in that of another, always as an end, and never as a means only (42).

The first formulation concerns the need for law; to put that more specifically in Buber's context, when we consider through reason the question of the rightness or otherwise of action, we will find if we follow Kant's application, that we have brought a law into being. Thus for Kant, the essence of morality is to be derived from the concept of law; everything in nature acts according to laws, but only a rational being has the capacity to act according to the idea of law, which is applied by will. Buber was unable to accept Law as part of the received Jewish tradition, that is it could never be for Buber a content of revelation. I shall discuss the implications of this difficulty in Chapter 8. However, I shall argue that in order to understand Buber, we need to consider that while he disavows the authority of particularised traditional law, he accepts and applies a universal form of this. It will follow, therefore, that if I am able to conclude Buber's acceptance of a universal law in Kantian terms, there will exist for him also precisely that sense of obligation and duty that the application of such a law implies.

The ethical implications of Buber's dialogical philosophy remains close to Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative, and Buber acknowledged the affinity (43). He then goes on to explain that while Kant's principle is expressed as an "ought" his point of view is derived from another source, namely that of the "inter-human". Buber makes the assumption that man as Kant understands him, remains in isolation and does not proceed from the expectation of "vital reciprocity" that is implied in Buber's notion of the inter-human. I submit that Buber's attempted distinction between "oughtness" and the

inter-human is not supportable since nothing in that formulation necessarily implies the notion of man in isolation. Furthermore, even if the distinction carries, Buber's "inter-human" source for right action is not relieved of the notion of either obligation or duty. What Buber is implying is that there is in the notion of "between" contained in his use of the term, inter-human, an ontic quality which gives to individual being a recognition of the other and a reciprocity which will out of itself produce the "right" kind of behaviour.

Buber's concern to maintain the distinction is surely occasioned by his suspicion of anything that hints of obligation especially of the kind implied by the presence of a law or system of laws. Friedman takes up the matter to argue the difference precisely at that point where Buber has acknowledged that in essential features his point of view has affinity with Kant's. He states that,

Buber's related concepts of making the other present and not imposing one's own truth on him are based on the ontological reality of the life between man and man (44).

There is no suggestion in Buber's essay, "Elements of the Inter-human", that exercising moral responsibility for the other can slide into an imposition of "one's own truth on him". Friedman concludes his description of how he understands Buber in this respect, to differ from Kant, by appealing to the fact that Buber's imperative is dialogical. I submit that one cannot retain the notion of an imperative and at the same time deny the notions of obligation and duty.

Kaufmann makes an interesting point relevant to my argument. He suggests that Kant's ethical imperative indicates "in what spirit" we are to do justice to others in our relationships with them. Further, it show us the right attitude to our fellow man can be seen as an attitude of respect for the other as individual (45). "Respect" seems to describe well the kind of response out of which the I assumes responsibility for the Thou, without requiring the force of either

duty or obligation. Nevertheless, as indicated above, I shall argue that a sense of duty, and the imperative nature of Kantian ethics, remains part of the mechanism of response in Buber's understanding of relationships, and that the quality of these relationships loses nothing as a consequence.

There is, however, another aspect of the discussion needing consideration. Kant naturally retains reason as being the mechanism by which man responds to the idea of the ethical. What concerns me here, is the notion of choice and the mechanisms by which an individual in a given situation will endeavour to decide what is the right thing to do. Buber would prefer to discount reason as being a mechanism lacking a relational quality and not therefore involved with the immediate, concrete situation. He prefers instead, to rely on something less identifiable, such as intuition, or simply an innate sense of what is right. But, in fact, as I have shown above, Buber is not able to by-pass man's rationality. Decision, presumably at some point and however fleeting, must involve the process of thought. The important subject of man's responsibility to choose and his freedom to do so will be the subject of further discussion.

#### (ii) Feuerbach.

In this section I intend firstly to outline those aspects of Feuerbach's thought which were of interest to Buber; this will also provide a context for his criticisms of Feuerbach. I shall then endeavour to examine Feuerbach's influence on Buber and the possibility of certain parallels in their thought.

Feuerbach's main impetus was derived from a reaction to, and criticism of Hegel, who's thought he regarded as the culmination of modern rationalism (46). Hegel had been concerned to show that the history of human social structure was capable of being comprehended by the single principle of the rationality of the real. Thus he was concerned with necessary truths given by history which itself was a

process following necessary laws. Hegel's philosophy is both a form of idealism and a form of monism (47). This latter was centred in the notion of a suprahuman subject-substance, a Spirit (Geist), in the logical structure of which all the diversity and complexity of the world could be comprehended (48). Because of his understanding of history as a process, argument ensued after his death as to how to interpret the continuous nature of that process.

In general terms Feuerbach was associated with a group of critics known as the Left (or Young) Hegelians which placed him in the company of thinkers such as Straus, Ruge, Stirner as well as Engels and Marx (49). As a leading figure of the Left Hegelians, Feuerbach's represented the view which argued that Hegel's philosophy could not be a basis of a really critical theory of society, for it was principally a justification of the status quo. Further, and more importantly, he believed that Hegel like all rationalists, concealed an essentially religious spirit beneath an apparent denial of transcendence. His argument developed to show that a subversive religious presence undermined the material world both of man and those senses characteristic of various aspects of Hegel's thought, such as ethics, epistemology and metaphysics (50). Thus, his criticism of Hegel developed into a more specific and thorough going criticism of both theology and philosophy which he interpreted as branches of anthropology. His main interests were to expose the illusionary character of all religious belief, and to advocate a "new philosophy" which would provide the basis for a humanistic social order and ethic.

Feuerbach's first main work was Das Wesen des Christentums, in which he argued that Christianity's claims about God were really obscured truths about the human species. Religious language was thus a form of code which he endeavoured to decipher in terms which would illuminate the nature of man rather than God. He suggested that to talk of God was a process that both degraded and mystified human

nature because it distracted attention from man by glorifying a non-human being;

Man - this is the mystery of religion - projects his being Wesen, into objectivity and then again makes himself an object of the projected image of himself thus converted into a subject, a person; he thinks of himself, is an object to himself, but as the object, on another being than himself (51).

What Feuerbach seems to be suggesting is that religious claims about the nature of God is a "mystified" way of talking about human beings; religious language is therefore a symbolic way of talking about man by talking about God. One of the principle methods used by Feuerbach is to invert some of the main propositions of religious language. We must, he writes,

invert the oracles of religion while at the same time seizing them as counter-truths - thus do we arrive at the truth. God suffers - Suffering is the predicate - however for human beings, for others, not for himself. What does this mean? Nothing other than: Suffering for others is divine. Whoever suffers for others, who dies for them, acts divinely, is a god to human beings (52).

Thus, the truth about human beings is concealed in God-language. But this concern exposes a problem for which Feuerbach provides an interesting answer: if all talk of God is of an infinite being, how can language conceal truths about finite man? He argues that the claims made for man from religious language are not about man himself, that is man as an individual but about the whole of the human species. In terms which seem to anticipate modern anthropology he speaks of a "species being," and a "species character" (53), in which notion lies its infinite character and its infinite knowledge;

But what the individual man does not know and cannot do all mankind together knows and can do. Thus, the divine knowledge that knows simultaneously every particular has its reality in the knowledge of the species. Not only divine omniscience but also divine omnipresence has realized itself in man (54).

Thus, for Feuerbach, the divine being is to be understood as human nature "purified"; as a consequence of this process of de-mythologising religion, it is to be understood as the relation of man

to himself.

In The Principles of the Philosophy of the Future Feuerbach questions philosophy and philosophical language in the same way as he questioned theology and religious language. Again, he argues that philosophy, and Hegelian philosophy in particular, is also a cryptic form of religious language. His aim is the establishment of the new philosophy referred to above. It is to be,

the philosophy that thinks of the concrete not in an abstract, but in a concrete manner. It is the philosophy that recognises the real in its reality as true, namely, in a manner corresponding to the essence of the real, and raises it into the principle and object of philosophy (55).

What Feuerbach proposes therefore, is a philosophy of the concrete. Thus "being" is not just to be regarded as thinking, (thus echoing Cartesian terms) but as it is for us as a "really existing being - only this being is the being of the senses, perception, feeling, and love" (56). The truth will be confessed in love and feeling since the new philosophy is itself,

nothing other than the essence of feeling elevated to consciousness - affirming in reason what every real man professes in his heart (57).

Feuerbach then proceeds by making a series of comparisons between the old and the new philosophy of which the following are examples; the old philosophy has claimed that only that which is thought of exists whereas the new states that only the loved and what can be loved, exists; the old starts by asserting that the individual is merely an abstract and thinking being to whose essence the body does not belong, whereas the new starts with the proposition that the individual is a real, sensuous being in which the body functions as the ego, the essence itself (58). Therefore, so far as man is concerned, the new philosophy "makes man the unique, universal and highest object of philosophy - and anthropology the universal science" (59). So central has this notion of man become for Feuerbach that truth is to be seen as the totality of human life and essence. The

essence of man is not to be found in any one individual but in community, in the "unity of man with man," which unity is dependent on a real distinction between I and thou (60). Thus notions such as freedom and infinity which had been previously presented in religious language, can be realised in the context of community, and all that is represented by the ideas associated with the word "God", can be satisfactorily realised by "man with man - the unity of I and thou" (61).

On the basis of this brief survey I can now offer the following summary of Feuerbach's relevant interests:

i) He is concerned to establish the primacy of human consciousness which even when its subject is God, is representing an image of ourselves to ourselves. It follows therefore, that he gives to consciousness and intellect an ontological and epistemological status and in so doing reverses the propositions of traditional materialism and idealism. An implication of this is, for example, that man differs from animals by a qualitative difference of his entire nature and not just by the notion of consciousness.

ii) Man is to hold the central place in any adequate philosophy. An understanding of the nature of man is to be achieved only by seeing man in his situation vis-à-vis nature, that is, as that part of nature which while being endowed with consciousness seeks to realise its own unique essence through relationships of a special kind both with nature and with other members of his own species.

I come now to the question of Buber's dissatisfaction with Feuerbach:

Firstly, he considers that Feuerbach's anthropological reduction of Hegel is in no way an advance on Kant and in one significant sense, is less advanced. This assertion is based on Buber's conclusion that Feuerbach does not even ask the basic Kantian question, "What is man?", and thus he considers that Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology is

invalid since it does not begin from the anthropological question (62). While one can agree with Buber's sense of urgency for the development of a philosophy which places man and his relationships at its centre, it has to be considered that his dissatisfaction with Feuerbach is based on his own narrower terms of reference for philosophical anthropology as such. These I have outlined in the introduction. Feuerbach does not actually state the question in Kant's form, but it cannot be said that the question is not asked by implication. What concerns Buber more specifically is that in his anthropological reduction, (and in this context Buber seems to use the word "reduction" pejoratively) Feuerbach's man is unproblematic whereas the man Buber places in the centre of his enquiry "is the beginning of all problematic (63). Even though Feuerbach transfers the lessons of history from man the individual to man in society, and even though the problems of society and community seem to take precedence over those of the individual, Feuerbach's concern for the condition of man is clear and Buber's reading seems to be oversimplistic.

Secondly, Buber objects to Feuerbach's understanding of man as such and there is an interesting tension arising between the two thinkers at this crucial point. Buber would argue that the emphasis must rest on the individual in whom resides both essence and potential in absolute terms; but as I have noted above the essence of man for Feuerbach is not to be found in individual man but in relationship, in the first instance in the connexion of I and Thou, and developing from this, in community (64). Further to this Feuerbach asserts that much is to be both understood and achieved by the dynamic implied in "man with man - the unity of I and thou" (65), which unity acknowledges a real and fundamental difference between I and thou. It was precisely at this point that Buber received his "decisive impetus" from Feuerbach which I will consider more fully below.



Thirdly, it is interesting to note that Buber does not develop his criticism of Feuerbach's anthropological reduction of God. That is he does not follow through his quotation of Feuerbach, namely, "man with man - the unity of I and Thou - is God" (66). Although he nowhere states this, for Buber, Feuerbach's anthropology would be taken as atheism. He would see the only difference between Hegel's and Feuerbach's understanding of God to be the former's notion of "universal reason" reduced to anthropological terms. Feuerbach's "atheism" however seems not to be clearly established. He speaks of God as a "thinking being" whose objects of thought are not to be distinguished from his being (67); also he tells us that "God is a spiritual, abstracted being", but at the same time is "the essence of being that embraces all beings in itself in unity with his abstracted being" (68). The difference between these identical abstract beings depends on whether they exist in, or apart from God, and this becomes a difference between imagined and real thought (69). How they can exist apart from God seems confused since we have already understood Feuerbach to say that God's objects of thought are not to be distinguished from his being. For the present my purpose is twofold; firstly to suggest that Feuerbach's notion of God could not satisfy Buber, and that for him the possibility of the former's atheism must remain, and secondly to suggest that the impetus Buber derived goes beyond the terms usually acknowledged, namely the possibilities of the merely concrete nature of the I/thou relationship. Thus, I submit, Feuerbach's I/thou can be read as an expression of his notion of God as "essence of being embracing all beings," which becomes in Buber's I-Thou encounter an expression of the "Eternal Thou."

Fourthly, Buber is dissatisfied with the notion of dialogue which emerges from Feuerbach's maxim,

True dialectic is not a monologue of a solitary thinker with himself; it is a dialogue between I and thou (70).

What seems to trouble Buber here is the activity of the solitary

one as thinker, or only as a thinker. The context of his criticism is a discussion of Humboldt's idea of a Thou "corresponding" to or "reflecting" the I (71). There are two interesting possibilities arising; the first is the idea that only through the corresponding Thou does the I achieve any reality or certainty of existence; the second which follows from this, is that because of the I's longing for such correspondence, the danger exists of the I inventing or imagining such a Thou as will achieve the desired relationship and fulfilment. The similarity between both these ideas and those of Feuerbach are clear. What is significant in Buber's reaction to this is the limitation suggested by the fact that between the I and the Thou the only mediator is either speech (Humboldt) or thought, (Feuerbach). Buber, in his concept of dialogue, reaches for something much more concrete than either of these possibilities. The Thou is not simply there to confirm the I, but also to oppose it, to stand over and against the I, because Buber conceives the Thou, as an I in his own right, an I which will think, live and have his being in another way. What Buber makes of dialogue is an exchange,

in which one is inexorably aware of the otherness of the other but does not at all contest it without realising it; one takes up its nature into one's own thinking, thinks in relation to it, addresses it in thought (72).

However, Buber is still not satisfied with his intensification of Feuerbach's thinking dialogue, for it remains still only a matter for thought, of ideation. The possibility still exists that for each of us the other has no more reality than the thought or idea we entertain. We must do more, Buber asserts, than be merely mindful of the other,

We should also, with the thinking, precisely with the thinking, live towards the other man, who is not framed by thought but bodily present before us; we should live towards his concrete life (73).

I suggest then, that the impetus Buber received from Feuerbach is not simply confined in the reference to the I-Thou relationship, nor to its possibilities for an encounter with the Absolute Other, but

that also he derived an important insight for his concept of dialogue. This insight can be summed up by saying that Buber adjusted the notion of the dialectic implied in the over-againstness of the Other, to the notion of dialogue implied by mutuality in relationship.

The matter of the influences from and parallels between Feuerbach and Buber must rest there. Further references will occur on specific subjects in the following chapters, but I hope my present purpose has been achieved, namely to show that the "impetus" Buber acknowledges as having been given by Feuerbach, is in fact more in the nature of an important influence which is wider and more basic than has hitherto been acknowledged. I will be concerned to examine this influence in more specific terms in my conclusions in Chapter 9.

### (iii) Nietzsche.

Nietzsche also figured large in Buber's adolescence and he includes reference to him in Meetings. He wrote of Thus Spake Zarathustra as the other book which "took possession" of him just two years after his encounter with Kant, when he would have been about seventeen years old (74). But unlike Kant who, "calmly confronted me, a willed and able utterance stormed up to and over me" (75). Nietzsche so captivated Buber that the book deprived him of his freedom; "it was a long time until I could liberate myself from it" (76).

At first sight, Nietzsche seems the most unlikely thinker to have interested Buber, indeed the two might be considered to be antithetical. It would not be to the point to consider here the many and enduring prejudices suffered by Nietzsche and the consequent misunderstandings of his thought by subsequent thinkers and commentators. It is, however, important to be aware of these prejudices especially when considering the various interpretations of Nietzsche's influence on Buber.

Kaplan considers that according to Buber, Nietzsche was, "the first thinker who came to actual grips with the problem of 'What is Man?'" (77). He fails, however, to make the point that Buber concluded that Nietzsche was wrong (78). Kaplan naturally draws on Buber's own essay which addresses this problem, but concentrates solely on Buber's fascination with Nietzsche's famous reply that man is "the animal that is not yet established" (79). In fact Buber's fascination had a far wider basis than this. I wish therefore to specify those aspects of Nietzsche's thought that impressed Buber and to indicate those areas of his own philosophy which derived impetus from them. Shown simply, the Nietzschean programme can be described as being concerned with three basic doctrines: the will to power, the eternal recurrence of events, and the Übermensch, or Overman.

a) The Will to Power. Not power of itself but the importance of the will became a central theme in Buber's thought. For Nietzsche the will is the means by which man attempts to recreate himself, to rise to the status of creator rather than remain simply as creature. Schopenhauer, on whom Nietzsche was partly dependent, was concerned with the instinctive drive, the "will to live." Nietzsche, in seeing that in animals life was put at risk in the struggle for domination, recognised the will to power to be the more original and basic instinctive drive. In a sense Buber takes up a balance of both drives, not in terms of instinct but in terms of intuition, and not in terms of contest for domination but in terms of relationships achieving full mutuality. The will to live becomes the will to live in relationship, since "all real living is meeting" (80); and the will to power becomes the imposition of will on the process of choice.

The reasons which finally distinguish Buber's use of these terms from that of Nietzsche are twofold, a) the fact that in Buber man is free to choose, and b) that in the exercising of that choice man is (morally) responsible. Both freedom and responsibility are assumed by

Nietzsche, as of right, as being characteristic of his Übermensch. They are to be exercised as a means to an end for purposes of domination and to further delineate differences and accentuate overagainstness, rather than to bring about mutuality, unity or realisation. As I will show, Buber retains the primacy of will as the determining energy for choice. It is choice, the act of choosing, that keeps the will central to Buber's ethics and metaphysics. And while Buber is also concerned with man's creativity, the activity of will is directed through choice and to a whole range of commitments and conditions of relationship that Nietzsche would consider irrelevant and evidence of fundamental weakness. For example, in Nietzsche's system there is little place for love; he would regard compassion as a weakness to be resisted.

From a psychological point of view, especially with regard to his subsequent insanity, it can be argued that Nietzsche's ethics have their origin in fear. His way is to oppose, to annihilate, to condemn and vilify the objects of his fear, be it women or religion. He is what Russell terms a "saint of fear" (81). One might in contrast term Buber a "saint of love", since (unlike Nietzsche) both compassion and love are the motive power for Buber in the achieving of everything he considers to be desirable.

b) The eternal recurrence of events. This notion is set by Nietzsche against the Christian idea of time's progress towards some kind of goal and fulfilment. The details of its formulation and the difficulties it contains need not concern me here. It is enough to note that Nietzsche understood existence to be in a sense cyclic, that all developments must have already existed and therefore are repetitive,

that everything has already been in existence innumerable times, inasmuch as the total arrangement of all forms of energy ever recurs (82).

It is, in fact a concept of time which, as we have seen, greatly

occupied the young Buber. It was a concept that had no appeal for him as a teaching, but the ecstatic power of the idea held his attention for a while. The,

'eternal return of the same,' that is, as an infinite sequence of finite periods of time, which are like one another in all things so that the end phase of the period goes over into its own beginning. This conception, is no teaching at all but the utterance of an ecstatically lived-through possibility of thought played over with ever new variations (83).

Perhaps, on this theme of eternal recurrence, the negative aspect of Buber's fascination is what is important since it held him back, it had a power to expel from his mind possible alternatives. It also clouded Buber's intuition of the genuine eternity "which sends forth time out of itself and sets us in that relationship to it we call existence" (84). However, I consider that Friedman and other commentators have passed too lightly over this aspect of Nietzsche's influence. During the earlier period of the development of Buber's thought there is an apparent relationship between Nietzsche's doctrine of "eternal recurrence" and Buber's interest in the notion of a "becoming God". Indeed Friedman does suggest that Nietzsche brings to the notion of the Creator God a great opponent, "the becoming God in whose development we can take part, the dimly glimpsed event of future evolutions" (85). Even allowing for the facts that a) Nietzsche's most famous maxim is "God is dead", and b) that all life is seen as purposeless, Nietzsche's system is not really evolutionary in implication, it is difficult to resist the idea that Buber's writing on the "Becoming God" is influenced directly by Nietzsche. It was, at the time, a kind of compromise Buber adopted to claim for God the middle ground between absolutism and immanence. Again it is a negative and retarding influence and I will show how Buber eventually sloughed it off and worked his way through to a wholly new concept of a God to be encountered in the present moment rather than to be conjured out of history or evolved in the future.

c) The Übermensch or Overman: Such a man is in a sense for Nietzsche "the incarnation of the will to power" (86). It is on this theme that Nietzsche has been most grossly misrepresented, even identified as a proto-Nazi and inspirer of the idea of a master or super-race. For this reason I prefer Kaufmann's translation of "Übermensch," as Overman, rather than the usual Superman. But the rendering has a further advantage because it facilitates a clearer understanding of Nietzsche's Overman as the one who has overcome and mastered himself. Indeed all the worst excesses of the misuse of power over others, of tyranny and dictatorship, maybe the frustrated substitute for man's failure in the nobler cause of self-mastery (87).

It is tempting at this point to essay a comparison between Nietzsche's "Overman" and Buber's "Perfect Man", but it would be fallacious to do so. In fact, it is by no means obvious how the Nietzschean Overman influenced Buber, but influences there are. It is likely that Buber's interpretation of the Zaddick, (see below) as well as his understanding of the Prophet and the concept of leadership, owe something to this Nietzschean influence. It is worth pointing out that both men were deeply impressed by Goethe. Nietzsche saw him as the great example of the man,

in whom the will to power is sublimated into creativity, and whose finest creation was himself; who rises above the overcoming of others to self-overcoming (88).

Buber, of course, used a verse from Goethe as a motto for I and Thou, omitted from later editions. It is also suggested that there is discernible in Buber's prose a stylistic influence. But there is more to it than that. There is a passage referring to Goethe in I and Thou, too long to be quoted in full, but I must make reference to it:

How beautiful and legitimate the full I of Goethe sounds! It is the I of pure intercourse with nature. Nature yields to it and speaks ceaselessly with it. Hence, when it returns to itself, the spirit of actuality stays with it (89).

The point is not to show how both Nietzsche and Buber might have been influenced by Goethe, though it is true both were, but to show that for each man Goethe represented something ideal in terms of the human being. What Buber derived from Nietzsche's presentation of Goethe, (and which was confirmed in his own reading and use of Goethe's work), was the idea that the goal of humanity lies not in some indeterminate undefined end but in the achievement, here and now, of (in Nietzsche's terms) the human species' highest specimens. We have seen, again in Nietzsche's terms, that the individual aspires to this condition through the will; we have seen, in Buber's terms, how the exercising of the same faculty, in the act of choice, determines individual destiny. Thus, Buber took from Nietzsche something of the confidence, of the potential, to triumph that exists in human nature and endowed his own "Perfect Man" with that same attribute, although he dressed him in the humbler and more appealing garb of the zaddik.

I want to make one further consideration on this theme. In Buber's mature thought the individual emerges, becomes whole in the act of meeting. The whole person becomes defined in the category of "the between", that is between himself and the affirmation of the other's Thou, and between himself and the affirmation of the Thou of the Eternal (See Chapter 9). In a sense this raises again the problem of Buber's subjectivity and the need for verification of the nature of the other that is being encountered, and indeed of the nature of the meeting itself. Levinas makes the point that if the category of "betweenness" functions as a category of being, it is man himself who remains locus for the act of being. He continues,

The personality is for Buber not merely a being among other beings, but is a category, in Kant's sense of the term, and it is Nietzsche who has compelled our acceptance of this (90).

This is significant since it suggests both the road along which Buber passed and the very different destination he reached by the time he wrote "What is Man?" in 1938, where all trace of Nietzsche's



independent and self-sufficient Overman is lost: "Man can become whole not by virtue of a relation to himself but only by virtue of a relation to another" (91).

While Buber withdrew from the task of translating Nietzsche, his influence remained, especially during his formative years. Although Buber was later to renounce Nietzsche's thought concerning the social implications of the "will to power", he felt his description of man's problems to be apposite and that his attempt to answer the question, "What is Man?" was rightly placed in the context of time and the eternal. Buber was to work his way through several revisions of his thought before finally being able to criticise "the will to power" thesis as a "sickness" and a, "futile effort to replace God, whom he declared dead, by other gods who must issue from within man himself" (92). In general terms Buber was influenced by the challenge that Nietzsche threw at his whole generation. Diamond sees it as a challenge to come to terms with,

the shallow, constricting, and hypocritical character of traditional values, to affirm life and its elemental forces (93).

In this vein, Buber in one of his earliest public statements shows the influence on him of Nietzsche's challenge by declaring: "Wir wollen nicht Revolution, wir sind Revolution ... We do not will a revolution, we are a revolution" (94).

This revolutionary energy was inclined to carry Buber along with it in his earlier years, in which he criticises existing forms both of Judaism and of society generally. There was much he would like to have seen swept away and in this, at least, Nietzsche was an ally. Thus in terms of the "active and productive", Nietzsche and Buber were concerned with the same problem,

namely the relationship between dynamism and form - between a 'Dionysian' energy which may prove destructive of all form and an 'Apollonian' limitation which may destroy all dynamism (95).

Buber not only opposed the demonic form-destroying Dionysian principle but also the Apollonian principle at that point where it hardens into an uncreative rigidity. It is likely that Buber did not fully understand Nietzsche at this point, since the Dionysian principle he opposes is not characteristic of Zarathustra or later writing. Indeed, Nietzsche came to understand the Dionysian flood of passion as needing to be subjected to the will along with all other passions. Far from seeing it as an energy that worked against form, he saw it as an energy needing to be controlled and creatively employed.

However, Buber, characteristically in his earlier writings, made use of these ideas and identified Apollonian rigidity with, the unfruitful, life-denying intellectuality of the ghetto and the overemphasis of official rabbinic Judaism on rigid ceremonial law (96).

I will show how Buber came to regard Hasidism as the true creative form of Judaism, in which was unified the whole man and the whole spirit in real community.

Nietzsche's style also lent something to Buber's own style both directly through texts such as Thus Spake Zarathustra, and indirectly by way of the later romantics with whom Buber had something in common. Malcolm Diamond tells us that:

he shared their tendency to emotive expression and their passionate involvement with art. His writings contain many illustrations drawn from the arts, and early in his career he wrote a number of essays on paintings, drama, and literature (97).

I and Thou, published in 1923, shows evidence of the stylistic influence of Nietzsche and it is this,

stylistic distance which is in part responsible both for the strangeness and the attraction which many readers experience on first encountering I and Thou (98).

Nietzsche's influence upon Buber also came indirectly and specifically through Buber's close friend Gustav Landauer (1869-1919), a sociologist whose thought was infected by Nietzschean

polemic. Landauer carried to Buber one particular issue that remained with him for the rest of his life. This was the conflict between the notion of a centralised political state which is inclined to lose sight of the individual, and those smaller groups within the state that strive for genuine community. As I will show, Buber's own vision of genuine community found its expression in his writings on Zionism and his work for that cause. His earliest writings and speeches date from the turn of the century when he was still under the influence of Nietzsche and romanticism. Into these we can read Buber's fascination with and individual use of Nietzschean themes such as the ideas referred to above of the active and the productive expressed as dynamism, enthusiasm and above all creativity. I will show how, for example, in these earlier writings Buber, "regarded Judaism as a channel for the creative energies of the individual Jew" (99). The blood tie, in particular, Buber places above all other influences in binding the individual to the spirit of his people in both the dead, the living and future generations (See chapter 5).

In July 1912 Buber sent Landauer "On Direction," the first dialogue of his book, Daniel (100). Landauer compared Buber's achievement with Nietzsche's, making the point that with the latter there is always a discordant separation between the subject and the speaker, the form being merely a device to carry ideas. He praised Buber for achieving an inseparable union between the subject of the speech and the speaker: "You have attained with this work what Nietzsche did not attain with Zarathustra and Dithyrambs" (101).

Friedman suggests that,

if the influence of Kant thus foreshadowed Buber's later dialogue with the 'eternal Thou', the influence of Nietzsche set him along the road that led up to it (102).

But since taking any direction indicated by Nietzsche would of necessity reach a destination different from that taken by Kant, it is difficult to agree with him. Nevertheless the influence is

established.

(iv) Kierkegaard.

On receipt of his copy of Buber's essay on Kierkegaard, "The Question to the Single One" (103), Albert Schweitzer wrote to him and asked,

Why do you take issue with this poor psychopath? He is no thinker. I read him only with aversion. What does he actually want? He has only been made into a thinker by everything people have written about him (104).

Although there is no record of Buber having replied to Schweitzer's criticism of Kierkegaard, his question has to be answered. A superficial reading of Buber might suggest that he takes up Kierkegaard simply to refute him, but in fact there are important and positive reasons for his interest in Kierkegaard, and Buber acknowledges his debt, as I will show below.

There is one aspect of their experience they had in common and it is a point of comparison missed by commentators concerned with Kierkegaard's influence on Buber. It was a formative experience of a relationship with another human being which, while each responded to it with radical difference, had a permanent effect on them both. I refer, of course, to Kierkegaard's rejection of his fiancée Regine Olsen, and to Buber's own rejection by his mother. For the former the decision to return his fiancée's ring became an expression of a central aspect of his faith; for the latter the experience of his mother's disappearance became a type for Vergegnung, "mis-meeting" which in one sense provided the energy for the central place he gave to the notion of true meeting, Begegnung. This suggests a psychological affinity which is worth pointing out but which I will not pursue. There are several other reasons for Buber's interest in Kierkegaard.

Firstly, what is important is that he was a religious thinker; that is, the answers he gave to the problems of mankind were based not

on philosophy, but on faith (105). In the sense that Kierkegaard set himself against the orthodox and established forms of his religion Buber might have recognised a fellow-traveller. Kaplan suggests that Buber was attracted by Kierkegaard's concern for "man's insecurity" and that he gave, "the first genuinely satisfying answer that dealt with that question in all its terrifying significance" (106). It is clear, that in this particular sense, Buber would favour Kierkegaard's understanding of man as "insecure" with all the attendant problems this implies, as against, for example, his belief that Feuerbach's conception of man was "unproblamatic."

Secondly, Buber considered that Kierkegaard's influence on phenomenological anthropology gave to it its individualistic character. What Buber was concerned to indicate was a shift from the kind of anthropology represented by Husserl, for whom a study of the meaning of man proceeded from one's own consciousness and intellectual process. Buber considers this approach too much based on psychological introspection. He understood Kierkegaard to made the necessary correction of emphasis even though this was of a "special nature" inasmuch as,

he was of all thinkers the one who most forcibly indicated that thought cannot authorize itself but is authorized only out of the existence of the thinking man (107).

Thus thought for Kierkegaard is both "a conceptual translation of faith" (108), and the authenticating principle of man's existence. There is a distant but discernible Cartesian echo.

The first of Kierkegaard's works to impress Buber was Fear and Trembling, built around the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.

I still think of that hour to-day because it was then that I received the impulse to reflect upon the categories of the ethical and the religious in their relation to each other (109).

Kaplan points out that Buber found in Kierkegaard the beginnings of a,

theological anthropology based on religious tradition for which he himself had been pleading in all his works (110).

As indicated, what Buber found he had in common with Kierkegaard was that his central question was religious, which (as Kaufmann suggests) makes Buber,

at heart a religious thinker rather more than a philosopher. His concern is not with the elaboration of a system but with the question: what does the religion of my fathers mean to me today? (111)

But the central issue which emerges like a foil to Buber's own thought concerns Kierkegaard's notion of der Einzelne, the "Single One", and his relationship to the Absolute. Wheelwright sums up the issue clearly:

Kierkegaard holds that man's one transcendental relationship that really counts is between himself and God, and that this special relationship may involve a relinquishment of all finite personal relationships or reduction of them to something quite incidental and secondary (112).

It is well known that Kierkegaard's renunciation of Regine Olsen was his personal expression of this principle, and that it became for him an outward symbol of a mode of faith, "a practical crystallization of his deepest thoughts and convictions" (113). Buber sees this as the central act of Kierkegaard's life and his response first found expression in an address given to the students of three German-Swiss universities towards the end of 1933. An elaboration of the address was eventually published in 1936 under the title "The Question to the Single One" (114). I will refer to the political context and implications of the essay in Chapter 9 when I will also discuss the aspects of it relevant to those themes.

Without wishing to anticipate that discussion, it must be noticed now that Buber considered Kierkegaard, (and also Max Stirner's category of der Einzige, the "unique one"), to be radically wrong. To establish the reasons for this, it seems to me wholly unnecessary and complicated to argue the case by reference to the dispute between

Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism as Wheelwright proceeds to do (115). He attempts an analogy between Buber and Kierkegaard and Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism respectively, in which Buber is supposed to represent the Lesser Vehicle concern for purity emancipating man to freedom of action; Kierkegaard is taken to represent the Greater Vehicle emphasis on the over-coming of self-attachment. This is a tortuous, especially when it is noted that Buber's own references to Buddhism and its literature have a totally different context and purpose which is to make clear the distinctions existing between the "I" of Single One, and the Buddhist notion of non-self, and also to refute self-abnegating and world denying forms of mysticism.

However, it should be noted that there is an important sense in which Buber has a place for solitariness, indeed the need at times for the individual to be alone, which is very different from saying that man's existential isolation is a necessary condition for his proper relationship to God. In various essays and passages of his writings (116), Buber indicates the criteria which, in a sense, authorise those moments when an individual will need to be apart. Indeed Moses himself is cited as a model of just such an individual who hearing the voice of God becomes by that calling, solitary, in an actual sense and in the sense of being set apart. The vital distinction to Kierkegaard, however, lies in the purpose of solitariness which in the case of Moses, (and indeed all the prophets), is to serve the community (especially and specifically the community of the faithful) and not to renounce it (117). And also -

There is need of the Single One who stands over against all being which is present to him - and thus also over against the body politic - and guarantees all being which is present to him - and thus also the body politic (188).

That being clear, we can now pay more finely tuned attention to Buber's opposition to Kierkegaard's "Single One". He considers that Kierkegaard has "fatefully misunderstood" that the Single One "has to do essentially, only with God". Buber directs his question to the

Single One on Kierkegaard's own Christian terms, that is, he cites Jesus' association of the two Old Testament commandments, "love God with all your might", and "love your neighbour as yourself", so as to show that, in the demands made on the individual, man and God are not rivals (119).

'In order to come to love,' says Kierkegaard about his renunciation of Regine Olsen, 'I had to remove the object.' That is sublimely to misunderstand God. ... Creatures are placed in my way so that I, their fellow-creature, by means of them and with them, find the way to God. A God in whom only the parallel lines of single approaches intersect is more akin to the 'God of the philosophers,' than to the 'God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' God wants us to come to him by means of the Reginas he has created and not by renunciation of them (120).

Kierkegaard would have been mystified not to say dismayed if he had heard Buber's insistence on loving one's neighbour as oneself, for far from seeing the neighbour as an affirmation of one's love of God, Kierkegaard considers that love of one's neighbour is the occasion for self-denial and a renunciation of the joy and happiness of the world (86). Happiness keeps the neighbour at bay, he cannot exist except as a last resort of suffering. How far this is from Buber's first resort for relationship! But Buber does agree with Kierkegaard's conclusion in "Fear and Trembling" that when God required Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, it was a unique moment which had no point in any system of universal morality. The ethical was "suspended." But Kierkegaard did not leave the matter there. His "Knight of Faith" must work out for himself who might be the "Isaac" God would have him sacrifice. In his case it was Regine Olsen and there was no relieving miracle. The question arises for Buber as to how the individual can be sure that the commanding voice is the authentic voice of God;

Abraham, to be sure, could not confuse with another the voice which once bade him leave his homeland and which he at the time recognised as the voice of God ... It can happen, however, that a sinful man is uncertain whether he does not have to sacrifice his (perhaps also very beloved) son to God for his sins (Micah 6:7.) For Moloch imitates the voice of God (121).



Buber is concerned to retain the idea of sacrifice (which in small or greater terms we are called upon to make) within the framework of religious experience and ethical norms. He is also concerned to show the extreme difficulty of mankind's situation in distinguishing the clear voice of God among the many confused voices claiming man's attention and devotion. What commentators seemed to have missed (but not Buber) in discussion of Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling is that in the end Regine Olsen was not the sacrificial victim, but that it was Kierkegaard himself, as he eventually admitted in that truly sad conclusion to his book: "Had I had faith, I would have remained with her."

There remain other points of significance between Buber and Kierkegaard and it is sufficient for my purpose just to draw attention to them. There is a similarity between Kierkegaard's "abyss", seen as the dread of self setting one on the edge of despair, and Buber's "narrow ridge", that narrow path determined by our choices; the former inspired by fear and despair and the latter by incisive choice. There is what Buber derived from the Hasidic notion of kavenah, (intention, in the sense of goal as well as purpose) and Kierkegaard's notion of kairos (122). Thus, Buber understands intention in ultimate terms, while Kierkegaard's praise of time, or better "timing" in terms of its fulfilment. Both are concerned with that unique moment filled with eternity and for Buber, there is still here the echo of an Nietzschean influence. There is the question of Buber's description of Kierkegaard as a schizophrenic (123) in that in making a jump from the religious to the ethical, he avoids the social. The religious and the ethical are therefore kept apart, a problem always of concern for Buber. But there is a stronger suggestion here which I submit remained with Buber. It concerns the contradictions of Kierkegaard life as on the one hand expressing unhappiness and despair, inwardness and solitariness, while as an observer delighting in the life of the

streets. What impressed Buber was the tension to be seen between attachment and detachment, which was to figure importantly in his work in terms of distance and relation. Finally, there is the thought that Buber's understanding of Good and Evil has some similarity to Kierkegaard's in that for both, these notions concern a subjective view of truth.

On the basis of this brief survey we can now say that in general terms it was Kierkegaard's existentialism that influenced Buber's formative years. The writings of Kierkegaard were translated into German in the first decade of this century and were available to Buber when he concluded his solitary and intensive study of Hasidism (124). Buber was sympathetic to Kierkegaard's assertion that a philosophy of man should concern the whole being in all its aspects.

Further, it is important to understand that Buber encountered Kierkegaard at the time when, after his study of Hasidism, he was moving towards a re-affirmation of a personal Jewish faith. Consequently Kierkegaard's influence was direct and lasting, as it helped Buber towards a deeper,

existential understanding of truth and of the way in which contemporary men may relate themselves creatively to the message of the Bible (125).

Also as with Kant, it can be seen that Kierkegaard's influence was not simply intellectual but had a direct bearing on Buber's understanding of his own experience. I shall discuss Buber's "discovery" of Hasidism in Chapter 4, but Diamond's point can be made now that Buber, "filtered Kierkegaard's existentialism through the teachings of Hasidism" (126).

What remained of Kierkegaard for Buber was the emphasis on the concrete everyday life of the individual. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Buber's shift of interest from the mystical nature of Hasidic teaching to the notion of the life of religious responsibility being concerned to bring holiness to bear on the

routine of daily life.

In summary we can say that, as Buber's existential understanding of experience developed, so he became increasingly more disenchanted both with mysticism and the isolated and even irrelevant experience of the solitary individual self Kierkegaard required man to be. Buber changes Kierkegaard's notion of the Single One into the notion of one whose relation with God includes rather than excludes relation to the inhabited world around. Kierkegaard's "Knight of Faith" finds God by isolating himself from the community of fellow human beings; Buber's man "of the narrow ridge" lives in a fully committed sense with and among and for other people but never does that commitment to the group stand in the way of his direct relationship to the "Thou".

Buber's own words serve best to bring this section to a conclusion:

We, ourselves wandering on the narrow ridge, must not shrink from the sight of the jutting rock on which Kierkegaard stands over the abyss; nor may we step on it. We have much to learn from him, but not the final lesson (127).

#### v) Two Teachers: Wilhelm Dilthey and Hermann Cohen.

##### a) Dilthey.

Buber studied with Dilthey at the University of Berlin in the summer of 1898 and the autumn of 1899 and he attended his lectures irregularly through the years 1906-1910 when he lived in Berlin (128). Of necessity, any philosophy which claims to be a "life-philosophy" will be wide-sweeping in its interests and Dilthey's philosophy is no exception. In this section I will first give a general outline of Dilthey's main interests and then examine specific aspects of his thought which I will argue have had an important influence on Buber. Dilthey's philosophy is drawn mainly from two sources; firstly that of post-Kantian philosophers such as Hegel, Schelling, and Schleiermacher and, secondly from a combination of British empiricism and the French

positivism of Comte (129). In broad terms he was concerned with history as a human phenomenon and that therefore the study of history must itself be undertaken as a human science. Against this vast canvas, he endeavoured to examine the way in which we can understand our own experience and the course of our own lives. Dilthey maintains the notion of history so-called is a phenomenon distinct from mere "process" or "occurrence" which are natural events to be understood in terms of natural causality. Furthermore history has to be seen as being distinct from the natural sciences and those events over which man has no control;

The human studies are distinguished from the sciences of nature first of all that the latter have for their objects facts which are presented to consciousness as from outside, as phenomena and given in isolation, while the objects of the former originate from within as real and as living continuum (130).

If, as Dilthey seems to require, the phenomena of history are to be distinguished from those of nature, it follows that each will be given a method of study appropriate to them. What then emerges, is not only what Dilthey has to say about both the whole sweep of human life and the narrower limits of individual life, but also his attempt to develop a method proper to the examination of each of these. In developing a basis for the nature and methodology of Geisteswissenschaften, (human studies) he was concerned to show the critical balance between the philosopher's personal and therefore narrow point of view, and the basis for a true philosophy of life the curriculum of which must be as broad as possible. Consequently the philosopher will be interested in those disciplines contributing to an understanding of life as such, for example, psychology, history, economics, philology, literary criticism, comparative religion and jurisprudence (131). But the philosopher has also much to contribute to these disciplines, namely an epistemology (which rests substantially on the notion of volitional experience), by which means a principle can be established which will unify the diversity

suggested by so wide a range of subjects.

Mankind as the agent of history cannot be studied simply as a natural phenomenon, that is as a physical fact. The link between history, man and the method employed to study and understand both, provides the basis for Dilthey's philosophical enquiry:

Mankind, if apprehended only by perception and perceptual knowledge, would be for us a physical fact, and as such it would be accessible only to natural scientific knowledge. It becomes an object for the human studies only in so far as human states are consciously lived, in so far as they find expression in living utterances, and in so far as these expressions are understood (132).

We have here the basis of Dilthey's concept of Das Verstehen, that is, the method of understanding. Whether we are concerned to understand the wider significance of historical events, or the meaning of a text, or a response from another human being, we can only achieve that knowledge with full understanding on the assumption that for men, life is experienced as meaningful, that there is a natural tendency to express that meaning and that this expression can be understood. These three tenets of Dilthey's epistemology formed the basis of his methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften (133).

To provide a more adequate background for the subjects I want to develop relevant to Buber, it needs to be further pointed out that Dilthey considered that there were certain conditions which must be met before understanding is possible. We must ourselves be familiar with, or make ourselves familiar with those processes through which meaning is experienced and communicated; because we are all human beings this condition will always be partially satisfied but we need to make fine and specific adjustments in the process of trying to understand someone else's beliefs, hates, loves, and opinions, etc. This sounds like "psychologism" and Dilthey was criticised for it (134). Further, we need a thorough knowledge of the particular concrete context in which they occur. That is a word is better understood in its verbal context, or a religious movement in the

context of the social and political conditions in which it took place. Indeed, knowledge of the social and cultural systems that determine the nature of the expressions with which we are confronted, is an indispensable condition for understanding (135). Dilthey's system is further elaborated but this outline will serve to set off certain aspects of Buber's thought.

Dilthey seems to have been seriously neglected as a possible major influence on Buber (136). I want to suggest that the influence is important and greatly assists our understanding of Buber's thought, especially as touches his concept of relationships, his understanding of history and his principles of interpretation. It must also be noticed that an examination of this possible influence heightens certain shortcomings in Buber's thought and exposes what can be termed as a negative influence.

The notion of experience was central to Dilthey's thought, and as already indicated was a major theme for Buber. To recapitulate and to summarise Buber's anxieties about experience, we can say that he was concerned that experience itself might come between the subject and the encounter so as to make it less than direct. Experience as received by means of perception and registered by means of feelings or emotions, is therefore not reliable in ascertaining the reality of the events. Dilthey leans more to a psychological understanding of experience because he was more open than Buber to the legitimate contribution of the science of that discipline. Buber was reluctant to call on psychological terms of reference considering that psychology was merely another means by which the subject would be distanced from the object of knowledge and understanding. That is, man as object, would be confined to the limitations of the attitude represented by the I/It locution.

Dilthey made a consistent emphasis on "the lived" character of inner experiences which manifests what is continuously present in life

itself. What is immediately discernible in all experience and what can be received as being real was one of Buber's central concerns and focused particularly in the basic word-pairs of his dialogical philosophy; this itself is concerned continuously with experience of "our life with nature, our life with men, and our life with spiritual beings" (137). The problem arises for Dilthey as to how to distinguish between "lived experience" and "inner experience." The former is more outgoing and therefore less susceptible to the dangers of subjectivity (138). Dilthey's important distinction here between two modes of experience is absent from Buber's thought. However, Dilthey's notion of "inner experience" identifies that aspect of experience of which Buber was suspicious because of the same dangers of subjectivity suggested by Dilthey. The notion of "lived experience" does not have its exact parallel for Buber, for what is outward and objective in relationships must have a character that transcends or overcomes experience as such. I have argued above and will sustain the argument in Chapters 6 and 7, that in fact Buber does not succeed in this aim of overcoming experience and that as a consequence an inadequacy emerges in his thinking, which is not satisfied by his concept of "between"; in fact this concept actually helps to indicate that gap, if not by defining it, then by the attempt to bridge it. It would assist us, if Buber had acknowledged in much the way as does Dilthey, that human life and perception is made up of an endless variety of different kinds of experience and that both to understand these and to make a unifying synthesis of them, we need to draw on the findings of several disciplines as does Dilthey in terms of his Geisteswissenschaften. Buber, always eclectic in his interests as was his teacher, sometimes confined his thought within more circumscribed and perhaps even idiosyncratic limits which meant that as in this subject under discussion, he lacked (because he rejected them), the terms of reference for a fuller and clearer exposition of

his meaning.

Furthermore, Dilthey suggests that running through all experience there is what he calls a "psychic nexus," that is "an inner connectedness", a Zusammenhang (139). This is a notion that must have had considerable appeal for Buber who was constantly searching for exactly this kind of unifying principle. In fact, "principle" may not be the best description, because what is sought as the connecting agency both by Dilthey and Buber, is not a principle to be applied in the sense that doing so would establish a unity which otherwise would not exist, but a perception of an existing unity underlying all manifest diversity. What Dilthey establishes is a methodology for perceiving the existing unity; Buber does not offer a methodology so much as an aspiration, a movement of conscious will which expresses itself as,

the longing for personal unity, from which must be born a unity of mankind. A great and full relation between man and man can only exist between unified and responsible persons (140).

Thus, when Buber writes of unity, he does so almost wistfully as of an ideal to be realised primarily in individual personal relationships relying on mutuality, but then also of relationships which can be fully reciprocal without achieving mutuality such as might exist between a man and an animal, or a teacher and pupil. For Buber, it would seem, a sense of unity must start from within the soul, as being a unity "beyond the reach of all the multiplicity it has hitherto received from life" (141), and this parallels almost exactly Dilthey's idea that life itself holds up to us the possibility of inner experience becoming "lived experience" as discussed above. Where Dilthey talks of "lived experience" in which unity can be perceived, Buber speaks of, "lived unity: the unity of life, as that which once truly won is no more torn by any changes (142). It seems possible that Buber was reaching for a concept of unity as expressed



in Dilthey's thought, but lacked the methodology to establish in his own system a notion of unity which was as substantial and concrete as Dilthey was able to present it. Buber's notion of unity seems then to remain internal, resting on the idea of Ungrund, as the "undifferentiated basic unity of the life of the soul" which longs "for personal unity, from which must be born a unity of mankind" (143).

To build up further the case for Buber's influence by Dilthey, we must note that associated in Dilthey's concept of unity is the concept of wholeness. Dilthey suggests interestingly that the whole of life is experienced; that is "the experienced (erlebte) whole (Zusammenhang) is primary" (144). What Dilthey is concerned to avoid is the danger of "an increasing separation of life from knowledge" (145) and what emerges is the notion of wholeness being the sustained relationship between "lived experience" and understanding, of being at the same time present to ourselves and to the world outside of ourselves. It would seem therefore that wholeness is bound up for Dilthey in the notion of "lived experience." But in the "adult psychic life" understanding seems at times to go beyond Erlebnis as lived experience (146). I suggest that it is here that we have a clue as to what prompted Buber's own attempts to overcome Erlebnis and to establish understanding on other grounds. We must ask, what other grounds are there? For Dilthey there,

is some kind of transcendental unity, some essential and peculiar wholeness, that is most distinctively evident in the lived experience also (147).

Buber states that man in his wholeness is the subject of philosophical anthropology (148). He understands wholeness to have two aspects. The first concerns the completeness of man's identity with nature. The "investigator", that is the philosopher, cannot consider man merely as an individual without also considering man as part of nature. Further to this the investigator must have this conception of

himself (149). Secondly, wholeness is something internal to the individual which takes place "in the concrete self" (150). To this has to be added that for Buber, wholeness is associated with the principle of individuation and it is by no means clear how Buber understands and uses this term. In one sense we find it associated simply with the notion of individualism where Buber is concerned to heighten the contrasts between this notion and collectivism (151). But there is also an important mystical connotation associated with the notion of individuation as Buber understands it and which stems from his doctoral dissertation (152).

Further to this, I want to suggest that there is another use of the idea of individuation with which Buber was familiar. An examination of this will require a brief but necessary excursion since I want to refer to the notion as used by C.J.Jung who provides us with an interesting working definition:

I use the term "individuation" to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological, "individual" that is, a separate, indivisible unity or "whole" (153).

The relevance of this to my discussion of the the notion of wholeness is clear both in reference to Dilthey's "psychic nexus" of the individual and to Buber's concern for an understanding of personal wholeness. If we now look again at Jung further light will be shed on the subject:

Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, in so far as "in-dividuality" embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self (154).

Despite Buber's constant claim to resist the implications of "psychologising" there is much in Jung's use of the concept of individuation that Buber absorbs and takes up in his own thought and language. What is of great significance, are the terms in which Buber states his dissatisfaction with Jung's use of the notion in what is a collection of his later work (155): here he complains that in Jung the concept of "self being originally a mystical concept", is transformed

into a Gnostic concept; that is, what Buber finds wanting in Jung is precisely the "genuine mystical concept" which he claims himself to have resisted.

Further discussion on this and other themes associated with Dilthey will occur in the following chapters and the matter of the nature of Dilthey's influence on Buber will be considered in my conclusions in Chapter 9.

#### b) Hermann Cohen.

Having been the leader of the Marburg school of Neo-Kantians, Cohen moved back to Berlin in 1912 where he had been a student, to lecture at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums and to devote himself to examining the relationship between religion and philosophy (156). Like Buber, Cohen became estranged from the Judaism of his upbringing; Buber was to find his way back to a Jewish faith through his commitment to and work for Zionism and by his study of Hasidism, while Cohen, in later life, rediscovered his faith by being able to establish a religion of reason from Jewish sources.

If I was concerned simply with chronology I would have considered the significance of Cohen for Buber's thought before my discussion of Dilthey. I have placed Cohen at the end of this chapter because the polemic which developed between Buber and Cohen forms a strong and natural link with the subjects of my next two Chapters, namely, Zionism and Hasidism. Further to this, Buber acknowledged an affinity with his later work and that of the later work of Cohen (157), but despite this acknowledgement it was the differences which are significant; the process of establishing them helped shape the direction of some of Buber's ideas.

In general terms there was a basic difference in emphasis on the role of philosophy in religious studies. Cohen's position was expressed in an unequivocal thesis:

Only philosophy of religion can accept the responsibility to decide what is and what is not essential in any given religion (158).

Buber's antithesis is just as unequivocal:

Philosophy errs in thinking of religion as founded in a noetical act, even if an inadequate one, and in therefore regarding the essence of religion as the knowledge of an object which is indifferent to being known (159).

This fundamental difference can be illustrated by considering their respective understanding of God. It is interesting to note that when Buber wrote his main criticism of Cohen's notion of God, it was after that time when the former had recovered his Judaism and the latter his faith (160). Even so, Buber is dissatisfied with Cohen's position. It is necessary to note that as an inheritor of Kant's critical idealism Cohen maintains an emphasis on the importance of mind for establishing what is real, and seems to fail to go beyond a concept of God which is only an idea, however necessary that idea might be;

The idea of God is absolutely necessary according to the critical method; if these intelligible ideas appear as unconditional, the (the idea of God) is their unconditional ground - and is consequently a principle of superior rank and of greater comprehensiveness (161).

The context of Cohen's discussion here is ethics, indeed he develops his argument to the point of suggesting the ethical realisation of God. Thus, through the medium of an ethical ideal Cohen establishes a correlation between God and man; Cohen's notion of God itself illustrates this important concept of correlation. Based on his notion of God as an idea, he asks the necessary question as to how it is possible to love an idea? The answer,

becomes clear in man's love for God, on the basis of God's love for man. Does one not love, even in the case of sensual love, only the idealized person, only the idea of the person? (162).

I shall return to the matter of correlation. For the moment it is necessary to remain with the specific subject of God. Cohen, in fact, seems gradually to "fill-out" his notion of God as an idea, to the

point where he approaches the more traditional Jewish anthropomorphisms. We can trace this change from his earlier Neo-Kantian attitude at Marburg to his period in Berlin at the Hochschule (163). Cohen's developing and changing idea of God offers an interesting parallel to Buber's own changing idea of God which was originally associated with a "becoming God" to be "realised" by man, an idea he later abandoned for a radically different "description of God as a Person who enters into direct relation" with man (164). This adjustment of this central concept is more closely in parallel than has been so far noted. Cohen also held to the notion of a becoming God" in his earlier anthropocentric system while his later thought became theocentric. Thus both men actually moved from the notion of "becoming" to the notion of "being." Cohen sums it up thus: "God is Being, Becoming is existence" (165).

Cohen offers the notion of correlation in Kantian terms as a fundamental category. In terms which seem to anticipate Buber he speaks of every moment having the potential of and being charged with the anticipation of correlation (166.) At its simplest correlation is the principle which relates two ideas in such a way that their separate meaning is determined by that combination, that is there exists between them a kind of logical continuity. It is worth looking at this a little more closely. Cohen understands reason as twofold, and therefore correlation as twofold, namely theoretical and practical. Theoretical correlation is concerned with origins and causality and is concerned to show that God, as Being is the origin of all causation. Practical correlation is concerned to show that God (the idea of God) is the basis of all ethical purpose. Thus Cohen concludes,

Only those attributes should be ascribed to him (God) which serve as the ground for man's morality and favour his drawing near to God (167).

The power of this idea for Buber's developing notion of

relationships is immediately apparent. It is tempting to see a direct correspondence between Cohen's twofold correlation and Buber's twofold attitudes, that is between correlation and relationship. I suggest however, that while there exists a strong influence, it is less obvious than this and, that it must be thus, because of Buber's radical criticism of Cohen's basic ground of God as an idea. What I suggest takes place is that in Buber's criticism of Cohen's philosophical systematisation of the correlation between God and nature and God and man, is an adjustment of Cohen's thought to show that while correlation exists, it is bound not by logical necessity but by the ontic demand of relationship. As indicated above, Buber concedes that finally Cohen changed his ground from that of God as idea to that of God as Being, and that Being for Cohen is itself founded on the notion of love. Thus, Buber finally felt able to testify that,

a philosopher who has been overwhelmed by faith must speak of love. Hermann Cohen, is a shining example of a philosopher who has been overwhelmed by faith (168).

I want now to turn to a second instance of a formative influence on Buber arising from his controversy with Cohen. This concerns a radically different understanding of their German identity and national commitment which in turn was inevitably associated with a difference in attitude to Zionism.

The theological-political dispute between Buber and Cohen centred around a theme from Spinoza's Tractate; the relation between Jewish religion and nationality. The debate first found expression in the pages of Der Jude, a review journal which Buber had edited in association with Weizmann. The issue revolved around an understanding of the terms "people", "nation" and "nationality." In a closely-balanced distinction Cohen maintained, "our dispute is not so much on the question of Jewish peoplehood as of the Jewish state"; those acknowledging allegiance to Jewish nationality can take their place

within the state in a way that the claim to "nationhood," would not allow (169). Buber argued that Cohen's position was adopted because of the prevailing international crisis which fed the Zionist cause. Buber attacked Cohen's concept of Jewish 'nationality' for being a 'fact of nature,' merely an anthropological accident of birth, and as such subsumable to the German nationalism and culture around it. For Buber, the notion, 'people', took on the attributes of personality, of a living entity with a historical continuity. In contradistinction, Cohen's idea of 'nation' was merely something identifiable with a community regularised by the state, that is a mere sociological contrivance sanctioned by law. In distinction to this Cohen understood Jewish nationality to be "the anthropological medium for the propagation of the religion of monotheism" (170). If Cohen used the controversy to find a clearer formulation for his own convictions, for Buber it marked a transition between his Zionism of the Jewish Renaissance, with its Nietzschean call to the creative dynamism of an emergent people, and his later, more biblically-based Zionism, with its prophetic call to a people inseparably bound up with land in the task of realising the sovereignty of God.

But the specific point of the terms over which this debate was enjoined gave rise to the related subject of Messianism. For Cohen, Messianism had become associated with the demythologised image of Isaiah's Israel as the suffering servant of God, willingly present among alien people for their moral education. With reference to Cohen's ethical interpretation of law, his concept of Messianism could be interpreted as a reduction to the social task of perfecting the world through good neighbourliness. This much Cohen claimed for the Jewish prophetic tradition. Of the prophets he wrote that,

in their politics, notwithstanding all their patriotism, they were Messianic citizens of the world. Their own state was only a step toward the federation of states of all mankind. The national individuality of the Jews in their stateless isolation is the symbol of the unity of mankind as

a federation of states (171).

Cohen clearly had great faith in the perseverance of the Jewish people to keep on with the task of witnessing to the nations but at the same time he had great faith in the German spirit of humanity and enlightenment, and the wave of liberalism with which he was so closely identified. Simon concludes that Cohen made,

the fundamental error of identifying the Messiah with the image of an existing non-Jewish nation (172).

This notion was not shared by any of the Zionists or by Buber. While Cohen confined the universalism of Judaism's mission within the context of German nationalism, Buber sought to break free of a nationalism of any kind whether it be German or Jewish; his ideal was to achieve the concept of a "people" with a supranational goal. As already suggested, the concept of Messianism that Buber was developing was related to his notion of "realisation." In this context Friedman suggests that, realisation has become a messianic category for Buber. It was in the name of this messianism that Buber rejected the devaluation of the notion of exile by anti-Zionists; thus what is to be "realised" through Zionism ensures that Zionism itself, (in its religious and culture forms) and therefore every true Zionist, is "on the way" (173).

The controversy was maintained by Zionists who took exception to Buber's "on the way," challenge, especially by those who felt themselves to be well settled as Germans. Buber declared that personally far from being alienated from Germanness, he loved the language, the landscape and the deeper levels of the people's soul - but none the less his roots were elsewhere (174).

Only in this way could he be a true Zionist, only with this attitude could he be "on the way" between an inauthentic existence in Germany and the wholeness of Jewish life in Palestine. In answer to Hermann Cohen, Buber evoked the prophetic command he believed Cohen to have misinterpreted, namely that the creative principle was to be



identified not with the state but with the national ideal of a unified people, in what Buber calls "the community of redemption" (175), which is consistently identified in biblical prophetic tradition, with the community that kept faith with God when the state lost faith. The First World War provided the context for the controversy and it illustrated Buber's concluding thoughts in this debate, inasmuch that it was the German state and not the German community that identified itself with the war movement.

The differences between the two men did much to focus Buber's thinking on many issues including that concerning the nature of his own German identity, which I will argue in Chapter 9 eventually coloured his identity as a Palestinian/Israeli citizen. Underpinning both was the issue of the nature of his Jewish identity. This naturally pivoted on the differences between the two men of the concept of God which I have discussed above. Buber saw Cohen as one who had ironically failed to accept that distinction of Pascal's between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham. Cohen is the great "system-creator";

God's only place is within a system of thought. The system defends itself with stupendous vigour against the living God who is bound to make questionable its perfection, and even its absolute authority. Cohen defends himself with the success of the system-creator. Cohen has constructed the last home for the God of the philosophers (176).

In the situation in which the Jews found themselves in the early years of the century the debate for both men concerned the life-blood of Judaism, its health and survival. Hermann Cohen died soon after the dispute with Buber had run its course, on April 4th. 1918. Buber did his best to revise the relationship posthumously and he took the occasion of the tenth anniversary of Cohen's death to praise his posthumously-published book, The Religion of Reason. For Buber the issues raised with Hermann Cohen were never only theoretical due primarily to his emigration to Palestine where his involvement in the

emergent State of Israel raised urgent questions requiring practical answers. (NB.117)

### Notes for Chapter 3.

1. Buber, Between Man and Man p118f.
2. ibid p123.
3. ibid p123.
4. ibid p123. (my emphasis)
5. ibid p124.
6. For examples see, The Knowledge of Man, "Elements of the Interhuman", "Distance and Relation", "Jung", "Discussion with Carl Rogers" etc.
7. Buber, Between Man and Man. p124.
8. ibid. My emphasis.
9. ibid. p119
10. ibid. p20.
11. Kant, Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Preface to the Second Edition (1787) p8.
12. ibid. p9.
13. ibid. Preface to the First Edition, (1781) p4.
14. Pascal, Pensées, Vol XII Grands Ecrivains de la France, p61.
15. Buber, What is Man? p168.
16. Kant, Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics, p37.
17. Kant op. cit. p41-69.
18. Kant arranged the categories in four groups of three:
  - a) Of quantity: i) unity, ii) plurality, iii) totality.
  - b) Of quality: iv) reality, v) negation, vi) limitation.
  - c) Of relation: vii) substance and accident, viii) cause and effect, ix) reciprocity.
  - d) Of modality, x) possibility, xi) existence, xii) necessity.
19. Buber, Meetings, p27.
20. Buber, Meetings, p29.
21. Kant, Critic of Pure Reason, Section II p94-96.
22. ibid. p108-113.
23. Buber, I and Thou, p11.
24. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," The Philosophy of Martin Buber.

- p712.
25. Friedman, "Martin Buber's Life and Work," Vol.I, p319f.
  26. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," op. cit. p712.
  27. ibid.
  28. Buber, I and Thou, p16.
  29. Buber, Between Man and Man p203f. My emphasis.
  30. Buber would have difficulty in understanding self, as personality, since this terms suggests of much of the kind of psychological overtone that he would wish to resist. Further, it also suggests notions of individuality of which Buber is suspicious.
  31. Katz, Stephen, Post-Holocaust Dialogues, p18.
  32. ibid. p10. Katz states that this remark appears in the "Introduction" of the Critique of Pure Reason. In fact, it is found in the 1787 "Preface to the Second Edition," of the Critique p18.
  33. Kant, op. cit. translated by J.M.D.Meikeljohn, J.M.Dent & Son. London. 1934 p18. I do not have access to a German edition.
  34. ibid. p17-20.
  35. Buber, Between Man and Man. "What is Man?" p169. My emphasis.
  36. Kant, op. cit. Chapter III, "The Ideal of Reason," p334f.
  37. Buber, "The Question to the Single One," Between Man and Man, p57-58.
  38. Buber, I and Thou, p134.
  39. Kaufmann, "Martin Buber's Philosophy of Religion," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p214.
  40. ibid. p213-14.
  41. Kant, Foundations of Metaphysics of Morality tr. T.K. Abott p38.
  42. ibid. p47.
  43. Buber, "Elements of the Interhuman," The Knowledge of Man, p84.
  44. Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, p199-200.
  45. Kaufmann, op. cit. p214.
  46. The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, Vol.III, p190.
  47. A Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Anthony Flew, p139.
  48. Russell, History of Western Philosophy, pp762-64.
  49. A Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Anthony Flew, p142-43.

50. The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, ed. Paul Edwards, Vol.III, pp190-92.
51. Feuerbach, Das Wesen des Christentums, The Essence of Christianity pp29-30.
52. ibid. p60.
53. ibid. p7f.
54. Feuerbach, Grundsätze der Philosophie der Zukunft, Principles of the Philosophy of the Future, p17. My emphasis.
55. ibid. p49.
56. ibid. p52.
57. ibid. p53.
58. ibid. pp52-55.
59. ibid. p70.
60. ibid. p71.
61. ibid.
62. Buber, "What is Man?", Between Man and Man, p147.
63. ibid.
64. ibid. pp147-48.
65. Feuerbach, op. cit. p71.
66. Feuerbach op cit.p71 and Buber op. cit. p147-48.
67. Feuerbach op. cit. p15.
68. ibid.
69. ibid.
70. ibid. p72.
71. Buber, "Dialogue", Between Man and Man p27. Buber quotes Wilhelm von Humboldt's The Dual Number (1827).
72. ibid. p27. My emphasis.
73. ibid. p27-28. My emphasis.
74. Buber, Meetings. p29.
75. ibid.
76. ibid.
77. Kaplan, op. cit. pp249f.
78. Buber, "What is Man?" op. cit. p184.

79. Kaplan, op. cit. p260.
80. Buber, I and Thou, p11, translated and introduced by R.G.Smith.
81. Russell, The History of Western Philosophy, p796. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957.
82. Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Introduction, p24, translated and introduced by R.J.Hollingdale.
83. Buber, Meetings, op. cit. p29.
84. Friedman, op. cit. p30. Friedman here is, in fact, quoting Buber; but because of the way Friedman arranges his notes and references it is impossible to identify the source.
85. ibid. p31.
86. Russell, op. cit. p794.
87. Nietzsche, op. cit. pp136f.
88. ibid. Introduction, p23.
89. Buber, I and Thou, p116, translated by Walter Kaufmann.
90. Levinas, "Martin Buber and the Theory of Knowledge," The Levinas Reader, Edited by Seán Hand, p66.
91. Buber, "What is Man?" op. cit. p204.
92. Kohanski, I and Thou: An Analytical Interpretation, Introduction, p3.
93. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p6.
94. Kohn, op. cit. p29.
95. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I op cit. p32.
96. ibid.
97. Diamond, op. cit. p6.
98. Smith R.G. Martin Buber, p3.
99. Diamond, op. cit. p149.
100. Buber, Daniel. Gespräche von der Verwirklichung.
101. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I. op. cit. p173.
102. ibid. p30.
103. Buber, "The Question to the Single One", p60f in Between Man and Man, op. cit.
104. Buber, Briefwechsel II no.561. in Vermes op. cit. p40.
105. Even this early in the development, it is an important distinction when applied to Buber's thought. It was later to

express itself in the crucial distinctions he made between philosophy and theology and the need not only for a synthesis of these disciplines, but for an alternative to both, which alternative could be found in faith as an activity applied to each lived moment.

106. Kaplan, op. cit. p260.
107. Buber, "What is Man?" op. cit. p197.
108. ibid.
109. Buber, Eclipse of God, p149.
110. Kaplan, op. cit. p261.
111. Kaufmann, "Buber's Religious Significance", p666 The Philosophy of Martin Buber.
112. Wheelwright, "Buber's Philosophical Anthropology", The Philosophy of Martin Buber. pp77-78.
113. ibid. p78.
114. Buber, "The Question to the Single One", p60, in Between Man and Man.
115. Wheelwright, Philip op. cit. p79f.
116. Cf: i) Buber, "Biblical Leadership," p137f in Biblical Humanism, ed N.N.Glatzer, and ii) Moses.
117. Cf: i) Kaufmann, "Buber's Philosophy of Religion", p221, in The Philosophy of Martin Buber, and ii) Buber, The Prophetic Faith. and, iii) Moses.
118. Buber, "The Question to the Single One," p108, in Between Man and Man.
119. ibid. p73.
120. ibid.
121. Buber, Eclipse of God. p87.
122. Cf: Kaufmann, op. cit. p217.
123. cf. Usher, Journey Through Dread, p22.
124. Diamond, op. cit. p10.
125. ibid. p11.
126. ibid.
127. Buber, "The Question to the Single One", p77, in Between Man and Man.
128. Kepnes, "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Buber-Scholem Controversy," Journal of Jewish Studies. Vol. XXXVIII, No.1 Spring 1987, p84. Kohn, Martin Buber, p59.

129. Hodges, H.A. The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, p2.
130. Dilthey, Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding, p28.
131. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Ed. Paul Edwards, Vol.11 p405.
132. Hodges, H.A. "Selected Passages from Dilthey," Wilhelm Dilthey:An Introduction, p142.
133. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, op. cit. p405.
134. See for example, Collingwood, R.G. The Idea of History, p172f, where Collingwood is concerned with an interesting discussion of Dilthey's reduction of the history of philosophy to a psychology of philosophers which itself accounts for differences of philosophy. Collingwood argues that this does not work; "Philosophy handled from a psychological point of view ceases to be philosophy at all." op.cit.p173.
135. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, op.cit. p406.
136. Friedman refers to Dilthey in The Life of Dialogue, to make a distinction between Geisteswissenschaften and Naturwissenschaften in terms of the rôle of the knower, p34. He further acknowledges an influence from Dilthey on Buber's understanding of the dialectic between religion and culture, p40 and again suggest an important influence on the development of Buber's I-Thou philosophy. These references are not expanded in Friedman's fuller work, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I-III. Kepnes rightly suggests that there is an influence from Dilthey on Buber's hermeneutic principles, see "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Buber-Scholem Controversy", Journal of Jewish Studies, Vol.XXXVIII, No.1. Spring, 1897.
137. Buber, Ich und Du, p6.
138. Dilthey, Descriptive Psychology & Historical Understanding, p35.
139. Dilthey, op.cit. p31.
140. Buber, "The Education of Character", Between Man and Man, p116.
141. Buber, "Dialogue", op. cit. p24.
142. ibid. p24.
143. ibid. Translator's (R.G.Smith) note, p207.
144. Dilthey, op. cit. p27.
145. ibid. p29.
146. ibid. p30.
147. Makkreel, R.A. "Introduction", in Dilthey, op.cit. p11. My emphasis.
148. Buber, "What is Man?" Between Man and Man, p123.
149. ibid. pp123-124.



150. ibid. p124.
151. ibid. pp200f. Friedman states that in this respect Buber was almost wholly influenced by Landauer. cf. Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I p84.
152. The dissertation for the University of Vienna in 1904, was entitled "From the History of the Problem of Individuation (Nicholas of Cusa and Jacob Boehme.)" In Friedman's account of this dissertation he seems to use the word "individualisation" interchangeably with "individuation." Friedman op.cit. pp78-79. The principle of individuation, however predates Boehme; it featured in Aquinas who understood the principle to be associated with nature's union of form and matter more specifically with "form" manifesting itself in particular objects, this manifestation being what Aquinas calls the principle of individuation. See Thilly, A History of Philosophy pp229-230. It was Duns Scotus who moved the emphasis from matter in general to individual being, that is, as that principle which distinguished one human being from another in terms not of physical but of qualitative difference. See, Russell, A History of Western Philosophy p467. What interested Buber, was Boehme's notion that despite the principle which individuated one being from another, there was "a harmony of individual tones fully developed in their individuality yet born from one movement." See Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work Vol.I pp78-79.
153. Jung, "The Archetypes of the Collected Unconscious", Collected Works Vol.9 p.275. My emphasis.
154. Jung, "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology" op.cit. Vol.7 p171.
155. Buber, "Religion and Modern Thinking" Eclipse of God p112. This essay first appeared in German in the February, 1952 issue of the journal Merkur. It was, of course, intended to be a criticism of Jung to which the latter replied in the May issue. Buber's own subsequent "Reply to C.G.Jung" forms the supplement to Eclipse of God, where it is interesting to notice, no further criticism is offered of Jung's concept of individuation.
156. Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, p729.
157. Buber, Die Schriften über das dialogische Prinzip. Nachwort, The History of the Dialogical Principal. Epilogue. p290.
158. See Cohen, Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums, Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism. p37 My emphasis.
159. Buber, "Religion and Philosophy," The Eclipse of God, p46. My emphasis.
160. Buber, "The Love of God and the Idea of Deity," ibid. p72f.
161. Cohen, Ethik des reinen Willens, The Ethics of Pure Will, p184.
162. Cohen, Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism, p160.
163. Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol.II p675.
164. Buber, "Preface to the 1923 Edition," On Judaism, p8f., "Postscript", Ich und Du, p135. And see my discussion of Buber's

understanding of God as the Eternal Thou, Chapter 7.

165. Cohen, Der Begriff der Religion p22-26.
166. *ibid.* p47f.
167. *ibid.* p106.
168. Buber, "The Love of God and The Idea of Deity" Eclipse of God p72.
169. Cohen, "Spinoza über Staat und Religion, Judentum und Christentum" Herman Cohens Jüdische Schriften II, Berlin, 1924, 319-327,
170. Cohen, Religion der Vernunft, The Religion of Reason, p421-424.
171. Cohen, Religion der Vernunft, p26 & p296.
172. Simon, "Martin Buber and German Jewry," Leo Baeck Year Book III p31.
173. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I p217.
174. Buber, "A Believing Humanism", Gleanings, p34.
175. *ibid.* p36.
176. Buber, "The Love of God and the Idea of Deity," Eclipse of God, p74.
177. Another of Buber's teachers at the University of Berlin was George Simmel, a Neo-Kantian associated with the Relativistic School. He was principally a sociologist but towards the end of his life took up metaphysics and aesthetics while in the Chair of Philosophy at Strasbourg (1914-18). See Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XX pp551f. Although Buber and Simmel maintained their relationship long after Buber left the University, I do not consider that there was any fundamental influence. The dominating influence of the period remains Dilthey's.

#### 4. ZIONISM.

My discussion at the end of the previous chapter of Buber's polemic with Cohen indicates that his attitude towards Zionism was already being shaped by the problematical questions of the nature of Jewish nationhood and the demands of German-Jewish identity. The subject is of great importance in progressing an understanding of Buber's self-definition and the nature of his Jewish self-awareness. I suggest that its importance to Buber is not derived merely by a reflection of the immense issues involved in Zionism and Jewish nationalism, but because on this one issue Buber's ideas and ideals were practically tried by way of political involvement; in this attempt Buber failed and emerged a deeply disillusioned man. I will be concerned to examine the reasons for this failure and the effect that it had on Buber.

In its essence Zionism confronted Judaism with the possibility and responsibility of assuming normal national life. Behind this basic and immediate fact lay deep and emotive notions such as to achieve nationhood on its own territory would vindicate and fulfil centuries of hope and expectation, as well as offer some solution to the mounting expressions of anti-semitism. In its simplest form, the main problem confronting Zionism in its pursuit of these aims, was the fact that the territory in question was already inhabited by Palestinian Arabs. It was Buber's search for his own roots that led him into the midst of these complex and far reaching issues and active participation in the Zionist movement (1). Almost immediately he found himself at odds with the central thrust of the movement which aimed to establish, at all costs, a Jewish state in Palestine. For his part, Buber saw "the founding of a political state as only one phase of a Jewish Renaissance" (2). There is a sense in which Buber's life-long concern with Zionism brings the nature of his Judaism more sharply into focus than any other subject. There are several reasons for my

suggesting this:

i) Zionism concerns an original Jewish concept which, in Buber's lifetime, had a critical manifestation in the events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel.

ii) The concept of Zion focuses the characteristic Buber demand on the active nature of faith. This should be expressed through choices exercised in the immediate problematic of the real world.

iii) The event of active Zionism became a theatre in which was played out the I-It, I-Thou drama; that is, the I-It of political Zionism and the I-Thou of cultural Zionism.

iv) Through the conflicts and disappointments in which Zionism involved him, Buber was able to refine his understanding of what was essential in Judaism.

To provide an intelligible context for my discussion I wish first to outline briefly various and opposing views on Zionism itself.

i) Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940), represented an extreme right-wing view of Zionism. In response to the Arab rioting during the Jewish Passover in 1920, he organised the Haganah to confront the rioters and protect Jewish people. Arrested and later released by the British he founded and led a Zionist Revisionist group and was also the political mentor of Menahem Begin. His concept of Zionism advocated the establishment of a Jewish state in its historic borders. Concerning all the problems and controversies this involved he was absolutely uncompromising, as was evident in his submission to the Palestine Royal Commission at the House of Lords, London, February 11th. 1937 (3). He considered all the cultural aspects of Zionism, such as Jewish self-expression, building a model community, Hebrew culture and so on, to be of no more practical use than luxury toys (4).

Jabotinsky argued that the plight of European Jewry is the only necessary argument for the establishment of a Jewish national state -

it is a simple argument based on need but presented vehemently and with great passion; there was something of the fire-brand about him:

I want you to realise this: the phenomenon called Zionism may include all kinds of dreams but all this is nothing in comparison with that tangible momentum or irresistible distress and need by which we are propelled and borne. We cannot 'concede' anything (5).

Three generations of thinkers have concluded the cause of Jewish suffering is the very fact of the, "diaspora, the bedrock fact that we are everywhere in a minority" (6). Jabotinsky demands a State for the Jewish people, the "normal condition for a people", (7) which is the only chance to save many millions of lives. He argues for a Jewish majority as a minimum demand and stresses that, with several other states from which to choose, the Palestinian Arabs choosing to remain under a Jewish majority will not experience any hardship; on the contrary their economic position was already the object of envy and Arabs of other countries were showing a tendency to immigrate to Palestine. In concluding his case, he says simply the issue before the Commission is one of, "the decisive terrible balance of Need. I think it is clear" (8).

ii) Ahad-Ha'am's (Asher Ginsberg's) understanding of Zionism represents, according to Buber, "the doctrine of the centre" (9). He is usually considered to be the founder of "cultural Zionism". Buber writes,

Ahad-Ha'am's Zionism is not 'smaller' than the political brand but greater. He demands not less, but more. He too strives for the founding of a Jewish community in Palestine, indeed he does not even object to the term, 'Jewish state'; But he sees this mass settlement as the organic centre of a great and living association of world Jewry, which will be able to live thanks to this organic centre (10).

What is immediately apparent is that the Diaspora is not so great a problem for cultural Zionism as it is for political Zionism. The Diaspora will derive energy and inspiration from the Jewish State, just as other peoples living outside their own countries derive confidence from their knowledge that a homeland for them exists.

This issue was to be an important argument Buber used in his refutation of an article written by Mahatma Gandhi, to which I will refer in Chapter 9. For Ahad-Ha'am Jews of the Diaspora and the State comprise one body of people. What emerges as being the basic difference between the so called "Cultural Zionists" and those of a strictly political, even military, persuasion, did not concern their aspirations for Palestine, but how they should be realised, that is, the methods to be used (11).

Ahad-Ha'am, Buber tells us, is the true Zionist, a hovevi-zion, (a true lover of Zion), the Zion that represents the centuries of yearning and hope embodied in the land of Israel. The State is merely the way to the establishment of Zion, whereas for the political Zionists it is an end in itself and the Zionism of those like Ahad-Ha'am is merely a myth. It can be argued that the cultural Zionists were unrealistic, or perhaps idealistic. On the other hand, it can also be argued that the uniqueness of Jewish nature, the Divine message and authentication of Jewish history, are not merely useless and encumbering impedimenta in the real world of political struggle, but indispensable ingredients of what that struggle is all about. Jewish uniqueness lies not in the people alone, or the land alone, but in the "association one with another" (12).

iii) Rabbi Abraham Kook (1866-1935) was representative of the Jewish religious orthodoxy in Palestine. His personal elaboration of the Zionist idea is based, "on the uniqueness and eternity of the relationship between the people and the land in Israel," (13) and the belief that Jewish return to the land is, "an important stage in mankind's advance to universal harmony." (14)

The relationship of people to land is itself born out of Israel's spiritual history manifest in its actual history; the land was pre-ordained for it." Kook's Zionism is mystical and inasmuch as it refutes any distinction between the religious and the secular, has

associations with Hasidism.

iv) A.D. Gordon (1865-1922) is identified with the reconstruction work of the working-class. He brought to Palestine a kind of peasant idealism and romanticism which drew not just on Jewish sources but on the Russian populist movement and on Tolstoy and Dostoevski. Buber certainly romanticises Gordon; what appealed to him especially was his understanding that Gordon had some kind of immediate association with "Nature" in a way that recalled his own childhood experiences on his father's farm (15). This is a form of Zionism which takes its energy from the belief in a mystical bond between man and nature understood not just in terms of a specific geography but cosmically, in "the organic unity and purposiveness of the cosmos" (16) which is ever available to man for rediscovery. Gordon believed that in the homeland Jewry would experience a moral rebirth, "which would make the Jewish people, an 'incarnation' of ideal humanity" (17).

We can find here other reasons for the great appeal this kind of thinking had for Buber who was to develop from Biblical sources the critical importance of the Jewish people's relationship to land and the place this relationship holds in terms of covenant (see Chapter 8). Thus Buber understands the land to have "empowered" Gordon's mouth, to the point where he has "become the mouth of the land" (18).

Among these various and conflicting views of Zionism Buber attempted to pick his own path. I will argue that it was these latter attitudes of Kook and Gordon which had the most marked effect on Buber's thinking. The implication of this is significant, since this theme illustrates my claim that Buber was not able entirely to renounce mysticism, and that his notion of Zionism, (particularly his historical understanding of this) and his interpretation of "land" as a concept, retains a mystical character. It is possible also that in this we find a reason why Buber was not able to mitigate his idealism in the hard world of political compromise. These suggestions will be

developed below.

Buber wrote and lectured extensively on the subject of Zionism (19); his fullest extended writing on the subject of Zionism is contained in the book "On Zion" (20) which is based on lectures given in Jerusalem in 1944. In the Foreword Nahum Glatzer points out the significance of that date which makes the immediate context of Buber's book that of the Second World War and the fate of Jewish people in German occupied countries. Against this background On Zion speaks of a "sacred mission, a command to found a just society and to initiate the Kingdom of God (21).

It is essential to keep in mind that for Buber the Zionist idea had its origins deep in the history and earliest literature of the Hebrew people. It is not my purpose here to rehearse that history in terms of the Zionist concept, but to indicate that for Buber it was a concept inextricably associated with Israel's election, with Covenant, and with something other than the notion of "nationalism", as the modern world understands that term. The term itself is not originally associated with a piece of land such as Canaan or Palestine or even Eretz-Israel but with a place of stronghold, of sanctuary which David made his residence. Zion is a concept associated with the notion of the "holy", a concept in which the "holy land" and the "holy people" make their point of inalienable contact. By 1944 Buber was able to concede that the idea of Zion was bound up with the imposing of a law, a "divine charter" to establish a national holy community. Zion was never simply a parcel of land which was the property of a people; the concept also contains something of the potential in terms of what God intends for the realisation of the Zionist concept. Thus in the "wedding" of land and people Buber finds authorisation for the oldest of Judaism's traditions and this must be considered in any understanding of what Judaism is and of what it means to be a Jew. Yet in the end, what is encountered is an essential and central



mystery, since,

In spite of all the names and historical events that have come down to us, what has come to pass, what is coming and shall come to pass between them, is and remains a mystery. From generation to generation the Jewish people have never ceased to meditate on this mystery (22).

That Buber should assert that at the heart of the Jewish people's relationship to land, there is "mystery" again suggests the possibility of a relationship which is mystical in character.

What set Buber on his way back towards the rediscovery of his religious roots occurred in the summer of 1898 while visiting his father's farming estates in Galicia; Buber read Mathias Acher's (Nathan Birnbaum's) Modern Judaism (23). Reading it amounted to a "conversion" to the Zionist cause. In 1900 he wrote to Solomon Buber, his grandfather, on the occasion of his birthday,

I have in mind working together with and helping to create the Jewish future. But both are ruled over by the spirit of the eternal people and in this sense I can perhaps say that I shall continue your lifework (24).

Friedman sees in this affirmation a "Nietzschean celebration of the noble, the strong, the creative, the pure" (25), but at the same time a passionate commitment by Buber to his people and its faith which was to save him from the assimilationist temptations to which so many of the Jews of the period succumbed. For many Zionism could be read as a secular movement, a political answer to anti-Semitism which allowed Jews qua Jews to make, openly, strong political statements. Such was the Zionism of Herzl's who in response to the anti-Semitism exposed in France by the celebrated trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, concluded that the only solution for Jewish people was national independence in their own country (26).

"Was anti-semitism a direct or indirect cause of Buber's conversion to Zionism?" Friedman asks (27). The evidence suggests that Buber's identity with the movement which he joined in 1898, a year after the first Zionist Congress, was more broadly-based and

motivated not just by his sorrowing over the experience and condition of, for example, the Russian Jews he encountered in transit for America, but also by his deep concern for the condition of Jewish religious life, the pluralism and confusion of Jewish self-image and definition, and by the yet wider consideration of the quality and potential of Jewish cultural life. To this must be added Buber's personal concern to find and re-affirm his own Jewish roots.

Buber began to shape his understanding of modern Zionism by taking issue with Herzl (see below) who, except for his political commitment, was subject to the assimilation Buber opposed. Hans Kohn, one of Buber's earlier biographers, suggested that if it had not been for Zionism, Buber would have remained an academic absorbed in the study of the cultures and religions of the world but lacking roots in any of them (28).

The idea of "Jewish Renaissance", was the subject of essays Buber wrote in the first years of the century. This concept of renaissance was an idea first seeded and germinated within his own experience as something he personally came to discover and feel about his own Judaism. It is characteristic of his thought at this time that he saw the Jewish religious festival as a metaphor of a resurgence of Jewish life; he could tie the festival "life a child to its mother" (29), which expression is itself poignant in the light of Buber's loss of his mother in childhood. Buber's notion of Jewish renaissance was at this time very close to the Reconstructionist program of Mordecai Kaplan, which aimed to, "transvaluate Judaism by retaining the old forms while supplying them with new, modern meanings" (30).

It was not that Buber's Zionism had become religious but rather that Zionism had become the new religion. Buber's mature perception caused him finally to reject a merely Jewish culture and ethos as an alternative to a direct and personal experience of the command of God, but during this period his passion was for the renaissance of Jewish

cultural life as such. Friedman again sees the influence of Nietzsche in the "vitalism and creativity" of this period of Buber's development (31). Certainly at this time, Buber was something of a Zionist visionary and activist, writing to Herzl to beg him to visit Leipzig and meet the immigrant Jews from Russia and Galicia, in whom "the old fire burns," and who had not succumbed to the assimilationism which marked other German Jewish communities; and also to come to Berlin to speak to the Zionists there;

But if you were to speak here, then everything would be transformed with a single stroke and the movement led to new life (32).

Buber in his turn became spokesman for the "Democratic Fraction" and joint editor with Feiwel of the Jüdischer Verlag. The Fraction stood against Herzl's political Zionism and sought to establish official recognition for its cultural counterpart. In 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress in Basel, Buber spoke on the subject of Jewish art. He received prolonged applause for his passionate argument for a rebirth of the creativity of the whole man, which was possible for the Jew only on Jewish soil. Only the creative man can be a whole man, and only whole men can be whole Jews. (33)

He wrote to Paula Winkler:

This congress is a turning-point. We youth are beginning to take the affairs in hand. (34)

In fact, Herzl did not allow Buber and Weizmann to put the resolutions of the Culture Committee (which included proposals for a national library and Jewish university in Jerusalem), until the last day of the conference. He invited two orthodox Russian rabbis to oppose the resolutions on the ground that, "'Jewish culture' was a threat to Jewish religion." (35) Nor did Herzl allow any of the sixty speakers, who indicated their wish to do so, to speak to the resolutions from the floor. Buber's response gave rise to a questioning of Herzl's leadership and the arguments that ensued were only in part resolved in the context of the Congress itself. Herzl's

biographer devotes only a single paragraph to the conflict in which he points out that,

the Democratic Fraction, which published a detailed program six months later, was the first party to arise in the movement, but it soon dissolved (36).

At this point, I want to look in greater detail at Buber's conflict with Herzl. Although Herzl died in July 1904, Buber's controversy with him continued for the rest of his life. There is some evidence to suggest that Buber retained some guilt in having to stand against the man who founded the Zionist party. Perhaps "guilt" is too strong a word, and what Buber lived with after his withdrawal from Zionist politics was a sorrow for having failed in an important relationship. To this must be added that Buber would have identified his own failure in politics with Herzl in a personal way. Looking back on this period from the distance of 1944 Buber wrote of Herzl:

We venerated him, loved him, but a great part of his being was alien to our souls. In a word, Herzl the liberal was alien to us (37).

After founding the breakaway, "Section for Jewish Art and Science" in the Berlin Zionist Association, which was the rooting in the West of Cultural Zionism (Kulturzionismus), Buber was still invited by Herzl in 1901 to go to Vienna as Editor of Die Welt. Buber was moved by the passion and the content of the vision for Palestine Herzl shared with him when they met to discuss the editorship of Die Welt. It was not until many years later that Buber was able to see clearly the distinction between his idealistic and romantic notion of das Geliebte und Gelobte and Herzl's specific and practical concern for land as geography, that is with the real, physical land (38). Again, we have the feeling here that Buber was not quite able to unravel the connection between the "idea" and the "reality", that he was susceptible to being carried along by the energy of his idealism with only a second thought for the practical problems and realities involved in translating the idea into a living reality.

Nevertheless, the keen differences between Buber and Herzl that emerged during the 1901 Zionist Congress cannot be simply associated with a difference in ideology but must also have reflected something of a deep incompatibility of temperament. This may have been the cause of the unease Buber always felt about the issues that lay between him and Herzl and may have accounted for the intensity with which exchanges were made between them. For Buber, it was clearly another painful instance of Vergegnung. In his correspondence with Herzl, Buber made an attempt if not at reconciliation, then certainly of reassurance, wanting to show Herzl that,

the idealism that burned in us, incapable as it was of polite expression, was next to your personal dream and ideal, the single great force in the movement and that only in these two - in your effective energy and boundless enthusiasm - did the meaning of the people's destiny live (39).

That a way to some kind of creative compromise seemed to Buber to be impossible, caused him great distress, and it seems evident that Buber took the matter personally. What touched him most deeply was what passed between himself and Herzl intuitively, in that space Buber was later to identify as "the between;" this was where he felt a sense of personal failure. Matters came to a head in the 1903 Congress after Herzl had delivered a personal attack on one of Buber's friends, Davis Trietsch. Buber accompanied by Feiwel went to Herzl's room in an attempt to point out to the President that his accusations were without ground. Friedman explains (40) that until that moment Buber had never ceased to believe in Herzl himself and had conducted his role as spokesman for the Fraction on the assumption that the difference was one of policy, even of principle. In a form Buber was not to encounter again he realised that, in Herzl, the Party and its leader were one and inseparable and that although Buber and Feiwel said what had to be said, they did so without conviction. It was impossible, Buber found, to appeal from Herzl, the leader of the

Zionist cause, to the cause itself. It was this occasion on which Buber found himself pondering when trying later to work out the dialogical implications of the relation between "cause," and "person."

Later in 1903 as a consequence of the opposition Fraction having gathered a greater momentum, Herzl wrote to Buber the letter that finally alienated him, exhorting Buber and his colleagues to "strive to find your way back to the movement!" (41) Buber was clearly deeply hurt and angered by the implied accusation that he had, in fact, left the movement at all. Whether or not Herzl intended Buber to take these words personally or as applied to the Democratic Fraction, or both, Ernst Simon suggests that the pain and anger remained with Buber for many years (42).

In this experience of the twenty-five year old Buber can be seen the existential root of the dialogical principle which seeks to relate even to the "Thou" of the opponent, because failure to do so confines the oppositions to that of two points of view, rather than that of two human beings. Herzl's sudden death meant that Buber lost the chance to achieve any major reconciliation. But that he had more than merely adjusted is attested by Hans Kohn, his biographer who says that Buber's tribute to Herzl is memorable no less for the quality of the language than for the fact that it was written in full awareness of all the shortcomings and problems of Herzl's personality and accepting the reality of their having been opponents. Kohn says that this generous objectivity of Buber's, was characteristic, that he always endeavoured to do justice to his critics and respect their human significance in a way "rare among scholarly and spiritual workers" (43).

Herzl's somewhat vicious dismissal of Ahad Ha'am was another factor that angered Buber, and Friedman considers that the issues for Buber amounted to a choice between these two men, "a choice decisive for the rest of his life." (44) In one sense Herzl and Ahad Ha'am

represented western and eastern Judaism respectively, and thus Buber's choice was a choice between the emphases of these two Jewish communities. It was a choice Buber would rather not have had to make because ideally he saw the future as a marriage of the best elements of each.

It is significant that Buber's return to this conflict in 1910 on the 50th. anniversary of Herzl's birth coincided with the period when he was creatively engaged with his "Three Addresses on Judaism," delivered in Prague between 1909 and 1911. He was in fact putting together a foundation for a concept of Zionism that was based precisely on those elements of eastern and western Judaism that would lead to its necessary renewal. Simon goes so far as to suggest that the figure of Herzl remained standing behind Buber;

He had at one time awakened the young Buber and stirred him. Although there is no direct echo of his voice in the Drei Reden, his image was godfather to their conception" (45).

This reconstruction of a new basis for Zionism draws out further the distinction between the two relationships that had, to that time, meant most to him, namely Herzl and Ahad Ha'am. Ernst Simon makes the point that what primarily influenced Buber was not Herzl's emphasis on the problems of the Jewish people and its need of Palestine, but Ahad Ha'am's concern for the suffering of the Jewish soul and its need for a renewed Judaism (46). But these distinctions can also be read as a misleading over-simplification. Buber was never able to see the need of Judaism only in terms of religious renewal, just as he was never able to see the need of the Jewish people only in terms of a national homeland in Palestine; the two were inextricably bound up together in the task of realising Judaism's divine mandate.

The rift between Buber and Herzl became final in 1903. Buber was faced with a choice of loyalties between Herzl and Ahad Ha'am. The latter had subjected Herzl's idealistic vision of life in the new Jewish state as described in his novel, Altneuland, to scathing

criticism. Herzl had written his famous epigram on the title page of the book; "If you will it, this is no fairy-tale". Ahad Ha'am's view of Zionism focused on what was original and creative in Jewish culture; we can understand therefore that he should be suspicious of Herzl's emphasis on a solely political concept of Zionism as being a new and more invidious form of assimilation (47).

Buber's earlier perception of Herzl as a charismatic leader was radically changed as he took issue with him in this conflict between political and cultural Zionism. When Herzl called Ahad Ha'am, "the stinking enemy that creeps into our ranks" it was impossible for Buber to remain with a foot in both camps, especially as Herzl wrongly assumed Buber to be the inspiration behind the article in which Ahad Ha'am had criticised Altneuland.

We must come back again to the central moral issue which prevented Buber from aligning himself with a purely political solution to the problem of a Jewish homeland, namely the Arab question. It would be wrong to conclude that Buber's moral concern, his question of conscience, was simply moral per se, without any regard at all to the practical problems in which the Jewish people would be involved, whatever the means by which a homeland in Palestine was to be established. Buber's stance was based on the belief that the moral question was politically relevant. Mendes-Flohr puts the matter simply;

most Zionist leaders could not allow the moral problem to affect the political priorities of the movement. Buber disputed this conclusion (47).

Inasmuch as Buber's identity with Zionism constitutes a considerable part of his self-image as a Jew, it is necessary to attempt to understand what he put together out of this period that was to contribute to his final position.

Buber rejected the fatalistic view that a conflict between Jew and Arab in Palestine was inevitable. This was the predominating view of



the Zionist movement almost from its inception. It was also its view that the movement must push forward resolutely despite the consequences of doing so. It seemed in those heady and visionary days of the movement's infancy that the Arab problem was a necessary and inevitable price to pay for a solution to the Jewish problem. This was not acquiescence, a mere resignation in the face of continuously growing opposition and conflict, but a realistic appraisal of the cost involved. Buber considered that cost to be too great; he passionately opposed any policy that would assert the Jewish claim and establish the Jewish nation by means of the politics of power. He argued that the attitudes of the Zionist leadership were wrong as well as their policies. In reply to a letter to Stefan Zweig, the Austrian-Jewish writer, in February 1918, he wrote,

I do not know anything about a 'Jewish state with cannons, flags and military decorations,' not even as a dream. I cannot accept your historical conclusions in reference to the new nation evolving, in Palestine out of ancient blood.  
(48)

By accepting that Zionist and Arab positions are irreconcilable, Buber argued that Zionist leadership had suspended the moral issue. Assuming conflict to be inevitable, the Zionist attitude eliminates the possibility of a just solution. Buber, as we shall see, had his own ideas on policy to offer, (for example that of a bi-national state). But he never assumed that any policy idea he had to offer was more effective or realistic, nor did he ever underestimate the complexity of the issues. What Buber placed to serve as a bridge between his "idea" and "reality" was demand for moral "direction", Richtung, which might lead to a "just alliance with the Arab peoples  
(49).

Buber attacked the leadership on another and probably more fundamental ground. In seeking his own Jewish roots and affirming his Jewish religiousness, he could not fail to be affected in these early years by the ethical double standards and policies of expediency he

saw around him; the disillusioning experience of his relationship with Herzl was but one example. He saw in the leadership what could only seem to him a deep hypocrisy. In general terms, the double standard so unacceptable to Buber was that he saw Jews perfectly capable of applying pious and moral criteria to their personal and corporate religious lives, but incapable or unwilling to do so in matters of political concern. As Mendes-Flohr shows, Buber found this to be true of the leadership's approach to the Arab problem:

Because of the insidious assumption that 'our cruel and complex world' is not amenable to ethical principles, they never-the-less proceeded along the beaten path of national self-assertion and Realpolitik. This cynicism, only thinly veiled by platitudinous homage to the ideals of morality and justice, constitutes, according to Buber, a forfeiture of the promise of those very ideals (50).

In summary Buber believed that the Arab problem was the central issue confronting Zionism and that the moral issue would not simply give way to power politics. He understood the mounting Arab opposition to be caused by the fear that their territory and rights as a people would, "be usurped and that the Jewish 'interlopers' would dominate them and their country" (51).

For Buber the question became one of how to reassure the Arab concern without compromising the Zionist aims, which in their pure form were themselves morally sound. He sought a political solution which would do justice to the moral responsibility. All the solutions that Buber and like-minded supporters put forward were based on a bi-nationalism and involved compromises unacceptable to the hard-line Zionists. Buber's position became known as "pacifist Zionism," a position that required the would-be occupiers of Palestine to extend to the Arabs precisely that kind of understanding and concern that they expected and required should be shown to them.

Buber points out that the reception of the Balfour Declaration in Palestine in 1917 was by no means unanimously unfavourable and that there existed within certain levels of Palestinian society the

possibility of peaceful settlement. This was true, for example, of the fellahin who, as a consequence of Jewish immigration, expected an improvement in their standard of living (52).

It followed for Buber that one of the implications of the "pacifist" stance was that Zionism should "go it alone"; that is, they should proceed by direct negotiation with the Arab leadership rather than ride to nationhood on the back of an imperialist power. Britain, towards whom powerful Arabs harboured considerable suspicion, could not be said to have the Arab interest at heart and consequently the pacifists demonstrated the principle that failure to respond creatively to the Arab problem was not only immoral but impolitic. Buber believed his position represented the greater realism (53).

One of the specific strategies Buber opposed was designed to reverse the demographic situation in Palestine and create by immigration a Jewish majority. Buber advocated the controversial strategy of a limited aliyah, a policy that placed him in a minority even within the pacifist camp. Inevitably, the situation was irreconcilable since the concept of limited aliyah stood directly in the path of the Zionist aim to establish in Palestine a majority sovereign nation with the means of determining its future. Buber shared this vision to the full but he believed that it represented an excessive ideology whereas his own vision of bi-nationalism was characterised by the sort of flexibility and political sensitivity that would make it realisable. He believed the hard-line Zionist aim was nothing short of self-deluded fantasy, if by that aim it was thought that a Jewish sovereign state in Palestine would finally bring the Jewish problem to an end. Indeed, he considered it would heighten and exacerbate precisely the problems it was designed to overcome (54). Buber felt so strongly about this that he determined to commit himself totally to the cause of forming a Zionist opposition group in fear that without this corrective "the soul of the movement will be

corrupted" (55).

From 1948 onwards events were to make Buber's forlorn pleas and seemingly unacceptable criticisms irrelevant. The war which greeted the establishment of the new state, Buber believed, was avoidable. By the nature of the concerns expressed, Buber was developing a philosophy in which the ethical principle was designed to be applied to the problems of the real world, however difficult and intractable those problems may appear. It is to his credit that after 1948 he adapted himself to the new situation and became something of a moral vigilante, trying tirelessly to guide and correct his government.

He was deeply suspicious of certain forms of nationalism, of what he called "this monstrous and monstrously growing phenomenon" (56), which he understood, sociologically, to have gathered momentum from the French Revolution but which failed to create the new forms intended,

for they did not try to establish themselves as people, that is, as a new organic order growing out of the natural forms of the life of the people. All they wanted was to become just such states, just such powerful, mechanized, and centralized state apparatuses as those which had existed in the past (57).

If the message of modern history was clear to Buber, then the Biblical message was even more challenging and the delegates could not have failed to see the intended parallelism between the ancient desire of Israel to be a nation like all the other nations, and their present nationalist cause. It was for Buber a matter of the nature of individual and group self-assertion, where the possibility always exists for either false or legitimate affirmation, which required a sensitive distinction to be maintained between the rights of the individual and those of the nation to which they belong (58).

The notion of a people implies at least a unity of fate, but a people only constitute a nation when they are forged as such by a collective experience which causes profound and decisive inner change; then,

a new phenomenon makes its appearance. We call it nationalism. A people is a phenomenon of life, a nation one of awareness, nationalism one of overemphasized awareness (59).

Buber was concerned to alert the Zionist movement to the dangers of false nationalism, which is to say the way it regards itself and its cause, and the face they, the Jewish people, qua people were about to present to the world and to the Palestinian Arabs in particular. The Jewish nation, Buber warned, needed to be on its guard for nationalism as represented by political Zionism was in danger of becoming an end in itself, at which point a nation, "annuls its own right to live, it grows sterile" (60). The application of these ideas to Judaism showed this "community of faith" to be more than a nation. But as a nation, with an identity and character of its own, it is entitled to national status with all the implications involved. But for the Jewish people it can never be forgotten that their national origins derive from the notion that God's provenance took on political form:

In other nations, the national powers in themselves vouch for the survival of the people. In Judaism, this guarantee is given by another power which, as I have said, makes the Jews more than a nation: the membership is a community of faith (61).

And the question of Israel's election? This concerns, not superiority but destiny, to avoid which means not nationalism in the true sense, but becoming like the other nations, merely nationally assimilated.

It was during the formative controversies of those early days of the Zionist movement that Buber developed his conception of politics. Mendes-Flohr describes how the root of Buber's political philosophy was grounded in the movement of Religious Socialism which emerged after the First World War.

Together with such religious intellectuals as Paul Tillich, Leonard Ragaz, and Eugen Rosenstock-Huesy, Buber contended that the anguish and disunion of modern society was due to the radical polarization of the sacred and secular sphere

(62).

From his study of Hasidism, which I discuss in the following chapter, Buber had learned that his division of these two realms was wholly artificial and not at all ontological. His attempts to find a system which unified judicious politics and applied morality was a specific example of the way he conceived the unity of all life. It was the aim of Religious Socialism to apply the highest moral and religious standards to the disunified condition of everyday life. Buber had no doubt at all that Religious Socialism is consonant with, "the spirit of authentic or primal Judaism (Urjudentum)" (63). This he also gleaned from the nature of Hasidic sacramentalism, but its purest expression for Buber was found in what he later wrote about and described as the Hebrew humanism of the Bible (60). His views, formed in the hard days between the wars, are summarised in a short essay, "Hebrew Humanism", written in 1942.

The men in the Bible are sinners like ourselves, but there is one sin they do not commit, our arch sin: they do not dare confine God to a circumscribed space or division of life, to 'religion.' They have not the insolence to draw boundaries around God's commandments and say to him: 'Up to this point, you are sovereign, but beyond these bounds begins the sovereignty of science or society or the state' (65).

The theme, quickening during these early years, rolls on and gathers increasing authority. Buber's concern for Zionism was that it should express the clear and pure ethic of its origins in Biblical times and become a vehicle for a genuine Hebrew humanism. The theme of the relationship of ethics to politics had been current in German thought at least since the second half of the eighteenth century when Herder had understood politics to be an earthly means of achieving universal ends in earthly life (66). Buber again found it difficult to accommodate himself to the "earthly" and pragmatic face of politics. He found himself in conflict with the social realism of Max Weber whose lecture of 1918, "Politics as a Vocation", had attracted wide interest:

He who lets himself in for politics, that is, for power and force as means, contracts with diabolical powers and for his action it is not true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but often the opposite is true. Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant (67).

Weber was not concerned to present a cynical view of politics and politicians but to draw attention to the intricate and complex nature of their responsibility. The true politician, he claimed, is aware of "the ethical paradox of politics" (68). Whether or not Weber would have regarded Buber as a political infant, Buber refused to accept the notion that the devil of politics lived hand-in-glove with the god of love (69). He accepted realistically that evil and good can wear each other's faces as masks and that for a while people could be deceived, but in the end the deception and its consequences would become apparent. He took his guidance from the prophet Isaiah, "Zion will be redeemed with justice" (70).

The theme we have seen running throughout this discussion of Buber's understanding of Zionism is that of the morality of politics. Undoubtedly the conclusion of his conflict with Herzl which I will consider below, affected his attitude to politics as such, which in its final formulation can only be described as negative. The tension between morality and politics is exactly that tension which exists between ends and means, between an individual's truth to himself and his responsibilities to the group of which he is part, whether it be a local community or national. For Buber the issue revolved around the idea of service to God, which service is closely akin to his concept of deed to be examined in subsequent chapters. It is in this context that we again find Buber being realistic in determining just how much the individual can achieve; in our service to God in the group one can only do "as much as one can". That is the conflict between the requirements of the group and the conscience of the individual will always relativise absolute aims and ideals. Further to this Buber's understanding of the application of ethical principles seems also to

be situational. Doing as much as one can will not necessarily be the same in all circumstances; each situation has to be appraised on the terms found within it (71).

what matters is that in every hour of decision we are aware of our responsibility and summon our conscience to weigh exactly how much is necessary to preserve the community, and accept just so much and no more; that we do not interpret the demands of a will-to-power as a demand made by life itself; that we do not make a practice of setting aside a certain sphere of action in which God's command does not hold, but rather regard this action as against His command, forced on us by the exigencies of the hour as a painful sacrifice (72).

This reference to not delineating a sphere in which "God's command does not hold", anticipates Buber's study of Hasidism from which he derived the notion of the sanctification of the whole of life (see Chapter 5). Such sanctification is bound up with the exercising of choice. The need to make the choices demanded in each situation are illustrative of what Buber termed the "narrow ridge", a metaphor he applied to the whole life of dialogue, but referring here specifically to the moral issue which confronted Zionism. However well he was able to maintain his own footing without compromise, he had to accept that others took a different direction which led in his eyes to disaster. It must have been difficult at the time for him to validate his belief that the Jewish claim did not negate the rights of the Arabs. It is a matter of minimising the sin, even of mitigating it by a constant and vigilant understanding and consideration of others, in this case the Palestinian Arabs.

There are important implications of Buber's attitude and method which must be pointed out now. His approach to the moral issues confronting Zionism confirm Buber in his subjective stance to the world. That is, while he can "see" what it is "right" to do he was not able to couch the principles involved in terms of policies capable of practical application. We see again, that the validating principle of consensus was something Buber found difficult to consider and that while Buber is able to give value to the individual he seems uncertain



as to how individuals together can act effectively, as a group. In the committee process of drafting resolutions around tables, there is an exercising of corporate concern and group conscience which is brought to bear on the problems of a concrete life-situation. Even allowing for the will to power and the politics of power and of the confusions of means and ends, it can not be supposed that the men with whom Buber tried to work were unmindful or unthinking of the Palestinian Arabs. What they attempted, insofar as it was possible, was decision making based on a rational analysis of the situation. What is certain is that they went, as Buber would have required them to do, as far as they could, in their consideration of the Arabs. Buber in his turn met them not with rational analysis, but with conviction based on something more inward, such as intuition and religious trust; he also, as he testified, went as far as he could. What transpired was that neither party could travel sufficiently towards the other to effect "true meeting"; a gap remained for which there was no bridge.

In 1919 Buber joined the Hitachdut, the German section of Ha-Po'el Ha-Tza'ir. This was founded in Palestine in 1905 to encourage the immigration of halutzim, who would build gradually towards the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth. Buber was invited to deliver the Hitachdut party's resolution on the Arab question to the Twelfth Zionist Congress in September 1921. After a brief preamble he put the resolution to the Congress, a resolution which was aimed to reassure the delegates that they were not less committed to establishing a Jewish homeland because they sought a moral means of doing so, and at the same time endeavouring to reassure the Palestinian Arabs:

Our national desire to renew the life of the people of Israel in their ancient homeland, however, is not aimed against any other people. We do not aspire to return to the Land of Israel with which we have inseparable historical and spiritual ties in order to suppress another people or to dominate them (73).

The resolution continues to reassure the Arabs as to their rights

as a people, to talk of "just alliance", to confirm that Jewish settlement does not aim "at the capitalistic exploitation of the region, nor does it serve any imperialistic aims whatsoever." Its running theme is land-usage, co-operation, "the socialist aim of our national ideal" (74). Before being put to the Congress as a whole, the resolution of the Hitachdut party was debated in committee where it met fierce opposition. A compromise proposal emerged. The emphasis Buber had tried to place on Zionism's moral responsibility was eliminated, as was his assurance that Zionism would not assume an attitude of "domineering nationalism, imperialism and capitalistic exploitation" (75).

In short both the spirit and content of the resolution was emasculated. Buber struggled in vain for his proposals and although he acknowledged that the facts of political life required compromise he believed that compromise should never vitiate principle. Looking back to this period from 1947, he wrote that this shocking experience affected the direction of the rest of his life.

Something happened which for any professional politician is an utterly simple and routine matter, but which appalled me to such an extent that I still haven't recovered from the shock (76).

Clearly Buber took the set-back personally and carried the "shock" of it for twenty-six years and probably for the rest of his life. His response was to withdraw from direct involvement in politics and to attempt for the remainder of his life to bring his influence to bear by other means. What he felt quite unable to do was to put himself in a position where he might have to make a choice between truth and the possibility of its realisation (77). This is, in some ways, a contradictory testimony. We have seen above the importance Buber places on the activity of choice. In the kinds of issues in which he engaged, it is surely not possible in the process of choosing to be sure that the choice will ensure the realisation of truth. The risk implied by choice is exactly that which defines Buber's own use of the

term "narrow ridge". Thus, I submit that if Buber really meant that he could no longer put himself in the position of taking that risk, it would have required a withdrawal from life itself. In fact, Buber's reaction to his political disillusionment determined the nature of the role he eventually assumed. He withdraws from the political activity of the group to become a lone voice, not as one crying in the wilderness, but as one making "oral presentations" intended to guide and influence those were actually making the decisions.

In September 1922, at the time when he was correcting the proofs of I and Thou, Buber wrote on Zionist policy in the form of "Questions and Answer," published in Der Jude. In this he argued that Zionist Realpolitik was conditioned by the perspective of Diaspora and that the movement must free itself of this view-point and attempt to assume a new perspective in terms of Palestine alone. In answer to a question concerning what his Land Policy meant, he wrote,

To direct all of our efforts, to the limit of our powers, to the upbuilding of the Land of Israel, not simply to building our nation within the Land, not only to the extent that is necessary for the success of our nation, but rather to building the Land truly for its own sake (78).

The phrase "for its own sake", is interesting. What could it mean? While I will be concerned more fully in Chapter 8, with the concept of land, for the present discussion I can suggest that Buber's meaning combines i) a mystical understanding of land inspired, for example, by Gordon, ii) a practical respect for the land in a husbanding and conservationist sense, iii) a notion of the sacredness of the land derived from his concept of covenant and the purposes of God in history.

I have shown how Buber came to be involved in the Zionist movement, what it meant to him, and the ideals he held out for it. After he emigrated to Palestine in 1938, he was to write and to lecture extensively on these themes but the main ideas were laid down during the early period. His Zionist concerns were sharpened as the

world set about coming to terms with the aftermath of the Second World War. The events leading to the establishment of the Israeli State and the subsequent and continuing threat from the Arabs kept the Zionist issues at the centre of Buber's commitments. Since, in the face of Nazism and the Holocaust, Zionism came to represent the main hope for European Jewry, I will consider in detail specific aspects of Buber's response in Chapter 9 and the possibility that his political disillusionment coloured his Palestinian/Israeli identity. Here, it must be shown that for Buber what became of greatest importance after the establishment of the State of Israel was that State's moral condition, that it should be seen to be as just as possible in all its dealings but especially towards the Palestinian Arabs.

Thus in general the themes and concerns occupying Buber remain the same. He holds up to the public the notion that the State is merely the "normalisation" of the Jewish people, that in pandering to the Jewish demand to be a "nation like other nations," it betrays the true vision of Zionism (79). In an article in Be'ayot HaZman (October 1948) he expressed the view that Egyptian and Arab aggression does not make Israel an innocent victim; rather it should be seen that Zionism's political ambitions have themselves been understood by the Arab world as "the primal aggression" (80). Buber engaged himself publicly and controversially in debates on every kind of subject, with all parts of Israeli society and with all manner of individuals, including David Ben-Gurion (81). He engaged in polemics on behalf of the Ichud, of groups supporting Arab-Jewish rapprochement, of Arabs whose lands had been appropriated. He represented outraged opinion, for example in November 1956, when curfews too quickly imposed led to the killing by a police patrol of Arab farmers returning home from their fields; on behalf of the Ichud he supported the "active neutralism", that is the non-alignment of Israel with the major power-blocks, called for by Nahum Goldmann when elected to the presidency of

the World Zionist Organisation in October 1957. And for those Arabs living under the rule of the Israeli State he called for true equal rights (82).

It has to be asked if Buber was too idealistic to make any really practical contribution to the solving of the problems facing the State of Israel. His idealism cannot be questioned but that does not mean it must be dismissed as the sort of luxury Jabotinsky felt irrelevant to Israel's needs. Buber's idealism represented the highest standards to which a Jewish community should aspire, since as he understood them, they are standards necessary to the fulfilling of God's will for his people. He considered his ideals to be expressive of an ethic derived from God's Covenant with Israel and therefore to be politically and morally necessary. It appears contradictory that while in the context of political bargaining Buber seemed unable to find the way of compromise, he nevertheless had a realistic perception of human fallibility and could, in other contexts, make allowances for it;

we cannot refrain from doing injustice altogether, but we are given the grace of not having to do more injustice than absolutely necessary. And this is none other than the grace which is accorded to us: humanity (83).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4.

1. Diamond, op. cit. p7.
2. ibid. p8.
3. Laqueur, ed. The Israel/Arab Reader, pp58-61.
4. ibid. p58 & p59.
5. ibid. p59.
6. ibid.
7. ibid. p60.
8. ibid. p61.
9. Buber, On Zion: The History of an Idea, translated by Stanley Godman; Forward by N.N.Glatzer, p143.
10. ibid. p143.
11. ibid.
12. ibid. p145.
13. ibid. p148.
14. Seltzer, Jewish People Jewish Thought, p724-725.
15. Buber, On Zion, p154.
16. Setlzer, op. cit. p723.
17. ibid. p724.
18. Buber, On Zion, p160 & p166.
19. Buber, A Land of Two Peoples, ed. with commentary by Paul R. Mendes-Flohr who has brought together many of these statements from February 1918 to February 1965.
20. Buber, On Zion, cf. Note 9.
21. ibid. Forward pvii.
22. ibid. pxx.
23. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.1 p37.
24. ibid. p39, quoting Buber: Briefwechsel 1 #11 p153f.
25. ibid p39.
26. Cohen, Theodor Herzl, p67.
27. Friedman, op. cit. p41.
28. Kohn, Martin Buber.
29. Friedman, op. cit. p44.

30. *ibid.*
31. *ibid.*
32. *ibid.* p54 quoting Buber: Briefwechsel 1 #9 p154.
33. *ibid.* p55.
34. *ibid.* p55 quoting Buber: Briefwechsel 1 #31 p165.
35. *ibid.* p55-56.
36. Cohen, *op. cit.* p254.
37. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I p63.
38. *ibid.* p62.
39. *ibid.* p379f
40. *ibid.* p66f.
41. Simon, "Martin Buber and German Jewry," p22. Quoting Jüdische Bewegung I, 167 (1905) in Leo Baeck Institute Year Book III.
42. *ibid.* p22.
43. Kohn, Martin Buber, p38.
44. Friedman, *op. cit.* p71.
45. *ibid.*
46. Simon, *op. cit.* p23.
47. Buber, A Land of Two People, Introduction p7.
48. *op.cit.* "A State of Cannons, Flags, And Military Decorations;" a letter to Stefan Zweig, 4th. February 1918, pp36-37.
49. Buber, *op.cit.* "A Proposed Resolution on the Arab Question", p61.
50. *op.cit.* Introduction, p13.
51. *ibid.*
52. *op.cit.* "At This Late Hour," April 1920, p44.
53. *op.cit.* Introduction p15.
54. *op.cit.* "A Majority or Many? A Postscript to a Speech." pp164-168.
55. *op.cit.* "Letter to Mr. Bergman", 3/4th. February 1918, p37.
56. *op.cit.* "Nationalism", September 1921. Address to the 12th. Zionist Congress, Karlsbad Czechoslovakia, p48.
57. *ibid.* p49.
58. *ibid.* p50.

59. *ibid.* p52.
60. *ibid.* p54.
61. *ibid.* p55.
62. *op. cit.* Introduction pp16/17.
63. *ibid.* p17.
64. Buber, Biblical Humanism, Eighteen Studies, ed. N.N. Glatzer.
65. Buber, "Hebrew Humanism", in Israel and the World, p247.
66. Buber, A Land of Two People, Introduction p17.
67. Weber, Essays in Sociology, translated by H.H.Gerth & C. Wright Mills, p121f.
68. *ibid.*
69. Buber, A Land of Two People, Introduction p18.
70. Isaiah 1:27.
71. Buber, "The Validity and Limitation of the Political Principle," in, Pointing the Way, translated and edited by Maurice Friedman, p217.
72. Buber, "Hebrew Humanism", Israel and the World, trans. Olga Marx, pp246-47.
73. Buber, "A Proposed Resolution on the Arab Question", A Land of Two People, p61.
74. *ibid.*
75. *op.cit.* "Resolution on the Arab Question of the Twelfth Zionist Congress," September 1921, p62
76. *op.cit.* "Truth and Deliverance," addressed to Judah L. Magnes of the Ichud, the association for Arab-Jewish rapprochement, July 1947, p65.
77. *ibid.*
78. *op.cit.* "Responsa on Zionist Policy," September 1922, pp71-72.
79. *op. cit.* "Zionism & 'Zionism'," May 1948. p220f.
80. Mendes-Flohr, ed. A Land of Two Peoples, p226f.
81. Cf., the March 1949 debate, between Martin Buber and David Ben-Gurion on the moral character of the State of Israel, A Land of Two Peoples, *op cit.* p239f.
82. These are only a few random references to the subjects of addresses given & articles written on these themes in the years up to Buber's death in 1965.
83. Buber, "Politics and Morality," April 1945, A Land of Two Peoples, p170,



## 5. HASIDISM.

It is my purpose in this chapter to examine Buber's response to, influence by, and interpretation of Hasidism. I shall be concerned, in the main, with the subject of mysticism and I hope to be able to advance my argument that despite his claim that mysticism was only a period through which he past, his work remained irrevocably attached to a mystical orientation which was itself confused. I shall therefore need to examine mysticism generally, and Hasidic mysticism in particular.

We have seen that Buber began to establish his identity as a Jew by identity with and representation of Zionism in its cultural form. From this platform he expressed total concern with the practical problems facing Jewish settlement in Palestine and the moral issues involved. With this new-found commitment we have to hold in balance that Buber was uncompromisingly idealistic, to the point where he could no longer identify himself with the processes of political decision. Thus, he set himself to the task of endeavouring to influence those who made the decisions. The driving force behind his work for Jewish renewal both in Germany and Palestine/Israel was this refurbished identity with the Jewish people. It will be important to take further the discussion in the previous chapter, of the notion of people as nation, which I will be concerned to do in the following chapter; at this point we can note that he felt this identity with an almost mystical intensity;

these people are part of myself. It is not together with them that I am suffering; 'I' am suffering these tribulations. My soul is not by the side of my people; my people 'is' my soul. I want my future - a new, total life, a life for my own self, for my people within me, for myself within my people (1).

But if Buber had found his roots he had not yet found his Judaism, or, as he confessed in a letter to Weizmann in 1918, "I professed Judaism before I really knew it" (2). His work for Zionism and the

Jewish Renaissance movement was only the first step in his religious rehabilitation. He realised,

that becoming part of the Jewish nation does not by itself transform the Jewish man. It gives him roots, to be sure, but he can be just as poor in soul with it as without it (3).

This second and vital stage which Buber believed was concerned with the enrichment of the soul was, for him, his "discovery" of Hasidism after which he was to spend much of his energies interpreting the message of that movement. But this discovery did not occur in a vacuum, for Buber had already become greatly attracted to mysticism and before considering Buber's encounter with Hasidism specifically, it is necessary to review the nature of the mysticism in which he was already involved.

It has to be noted that Buber's first response to religious mysticism was, in fact, through his childhood encounter with Hasidism and, characteristically, it made a formative impression. It took place "in the dirty village of Sadagora," which was the seat of a dynasty of zaddikim. Buber records that he failed to find in this community the "high faith of original Hasidism", nor that devoted recognition in the zaddik of the perfected man; nevertheless,

Even in these degenerate Hasidism there still continues to glow, in the unknown ground of their souls, the word of Rabbi Eliezar that the world was created for the sake of the perfected man (the zaddik) (4).

Other than this early experience the mysticism which first attracted Buber's participation was of a very different kind. It was associated with a movement - the New Community, founded by Heinrich and Julius Hart. It was concerned with the condition of society and its radical renewal. This overtly social mysticism combined the notion of an unsettling divine activity with the establishment of a community designed to bring in the "new age (through) beauty, art and religious education" (5). The New Community was led by Gustav Landauer, whom Buber had met in 1899 and who became one of Buber's closest friends, a friendship that was to prove decisively influential. Hans Kohn

describes how Landauer's edition of the German mystic Meister Eckhart impressed Buber, and exerted an influence mainly concerned with the techniques of translation and presentation which he was soon to apply to his work on Hasidic writings (6).

During the two years from 1899 Buber remained close to the New Community and lectured to them on Jacob Böehme, the Lutheran mystic (7). By Boehme, Buber was infected with a "wonderful world feeling" of an elated relationship of the "I" to the world, the sense of potential unity between all things at the most fundamental level; this sense of unity was conditional on the individual transcending sense impressions. But for Buber this is not a unity of absorption, a loss of self-awareness within a bland or even ecstatic experience of the world, but a unity which rigorously maintains a self-conscious "I" and a vital awareness of the other, and which is therefore based on true relationship. In an essay of 1901 based on the lectures referred to above, Buber invokes Ludwig Feuerbach's notion that, "man with man - the unity of I and Thou - is God" (8). I have already suggested that there exists here the seed of Buber's own dialogical philosophy, despite his avowed rejection of Feuerbach's formulation as disallowing the individuality of man and the implication of a separateness to be overcome.

By man, whom he considers as the highest subject of philosophy, Feuerbach does not mean man as an individual, but man with man - the connexion of I and Thou (9).

Buber's doctoral dissertation for the University of Vienna in 1904 was entitled, From the History of the Problem of Individuation Nicholas of Cusa and Jacob Boehme (10). The essay, "What is Man?", takes its form and some of its substance from his student thesis. Buber tells us that,

Since 1900 I had first been under the influence of German mysticism from Meister Eckhart to Angelus Silesius, according to which the primal ground, (Urgrund) of being, the nameless, impersonal godhead, comes to 'birth' in the human soul (11).

In the essay Buber argued strongly against two aspects of medieval mysticism. The first is acknowledged above and is that which sought the birth of God in the human soul, or in Buber's terms, which understood God as "becoming" by means of realisation (12). The second, is more general and concerns that which called for self and world denial. In fact, Eckhart repudiates other-worldly escapism; he speaks of the need to learn, "an inner solitude, in which it is implied, one may be conscious of God, wherever one may be" (13). This is a notion we might have expected to appeal to Buber, especially after his study of Hasidism and it is odd that he makes no mention in his essay of the balance Eckhart achieved. The question of his having once adopted the notion of the "becoming God" remained to embarrass Buber for the rest of his life, despite his vehement reference in 1923 to, "the hopelessly perverted conception that God is not but rather becomes - in man or mankind" (14).

Before embarking on an examination of the nature of Hasidic mysticism, I want to suggest that Buber's view of mysticism itself might well have been too narrow; that is he attached himself only to a certain form of mysticism and that what he claimed to have eventually renounced were simply characteristics of certain kinds of mysticism, while retaining himself other characteristics. In general terms, mysticism has two characteristics or perhaps better, mysticism makes two claims; the first is that of a direct and unmediated experience of God, or the divine, and the second, contingent on this, is that in this experience the individual achieves (temporary) unity with God (15). It can be said, again in general terms, that the various kinds of mysticism are identified by the different ways in which the above claims are achieved. Thus, for example, Buber was impressed by Boehme's visionary mysticism in that his crucial experience came to him while looking at the polished surface of a pewter dish reflecting sunlight. In this vision Boehme claimed to have

"reached to the innermost birth of the Deity" as the result of which he testified that,

In one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at a university. I saw and knew the Being of Beings, the origin and descent of this world and of all creatures through divine Wisdom (16).

I suggest that there is, between this testimony of Boehme's and Buber's own testimony to his experience of a Doric pillar, a direct parallel. He speaks of this object as a "mysterious primal mass, a structure of spirit" (my emphasis);

From this point we may look over into that other realm, the realm, the realm of what is 'not to hand', of contact with spiritual being, of the arising word and form (17).

Even allowing that a Doric pillar in Syracuse is somewhat more exotic than a household dish, what emerges as being of great significance is that Buber here retains that characteristic of mysticism which suggests that the potential for visionary experience is contained all the time in our contemplation of natural objects. For Buber, Spirit is constantly expressed in form, whether these forms are man made or not. In contrast to this aspect of a characteristic of mysticism which Buber retained, I have referred above to one of the characteristics he was unable to accept, namely that kind of mysticism which requires a renunciation of self and the world. Clearly in the example just given, the potential for mystical experience is wholly dependent for its inception on a self-conscious contemplation of the world to hand. It is in this respect that I submit Buber never succeeded in freeing himself from a mystical orientation; the world to hand was always the subject of Buber's thought because it held for him the potential for Boehme's kind of experience. Thus what might have begun for Buber with the horse on his father's farm, continued with him as a perception and a potential for the remainder of his life.

Following these comments it is worth looking briefly at the statements Buber made concerning mysticism during this earlier period.

In 1910 during a debate of a conference of sociologists at Frankfurt am Main, Buber suggested that mysticism should be understood as a "religious solipsism". It remains strictly in the sphere of the individual and in so doing,

mysticism itself negates community. For if there is only one real relationship, the relationship of the individual to God. Mysticism, 'the true content of the religious experience,' can have nothing to do with the normalisation of the relationship with men (18).

The solipsism with which Buber here seems to have some sympathy, and for which he was later to criticise Kierkegaard (19), suggests that psychological perception lies at the centre of Buber's understanding of mysticism.

In "The Teaching of the Tao" (20) written in 1910, Buber shows his attraction to a teaching the emphasis of which is on the essential unity found through the genuinely fulfilled life. The Tao-te-ching explains,

There was a living thing, a mixture of all potentialities but perfect in itself, before the skies and the earth were formed. It was tranquil and empty and may be regarded as the mother of the universe. I do not know its proper name, but choosing a written character for it, I take the character Tao, the Way (21).

Tao, the "path" or "way", is understood by its followers to be the fundamental basis and the origin of all being, the essence of life. The immediate goal is physical survival, since as the Chinese had no doctrine of life after death, immortality was understood as the indefinite physical prolongation of life. To achieve this an individual had to transform his mortal body into an incorruptible body by means of becoming as much like the Tao as possible (22).

Buber's interpretation of Taoism is, I submit, both romanticised and selective, heightening an emphasises on a unity which can be found in this life for this present human soul;

Tao implies that only the whole meaning of being rests in the unity of the genuine life, that it is experienced nowhere else, that it is just this unity which is grasped as the absolute. But what is experienced is again neither nature nor reason nor energy, but the unity of the path, the unity of

the genuine human way that rediscovers the united in the world and in each thing: the path as the unity of the world, as the unity of each thing (23).

It seems that Buber takes from the philosophy of Taoism only what serves his purpose which is to illustrate his general assertion that there exists a basic unity in which human life is to be integrated. The domination of the importance of achieving physical immortality involved not only the more contemplative practices traditionally associated with the individual's quest for unity with some saving power, but also the use of crude rituals, alchemy and magic. The other side of Taoism's mystical coin required a quietism which resulted in negative attitudes towards the practical daily problems of life (24). Further to this, there is an aspect of Taoism that might have seemed to have great appeal to Buber but on which we find no reference. This concerns the extent to which the teacher, or sage was venerated by his followers. So great was the influence of the power, (te,) of the Way working through him, that people accepted without question his leadership over their community (25). This makes a striking parallel with the Hasidic community's veneration of the zaddik, a parallel which it is surprising Buber did not pick up, especially as he understands the man in whom Tao realises itself in the genuine life, to be, like the zaddik, the perfect man (26).

The question has to be asked as to whether it is possible to be an existentialist and at the same time retain a certain association with mysticism? In the Introduction I referred to the nature of Buber's existentialism and I shall have further need to examine this characteristic of his thought in Chapter 6. Subsequently to this I will be in a stronger position to discuss the existentialist/mystical tension of Buber's thought in my conclusions in chapter 9. However, it is possible now to note that in 1913 Buber made a thorough going attempt to combine the mystic's demand for life lived in terms of the highest abstract truth and the existentialist demand for self-

realisation through genuine existence. The result was Daniel: Dialogues of Realisation. For Buber it was a transitional statement on the way to his dialogical philosophy and a statement in which he recast his earlier understanding of the mystical experience. It is in Daniel that Buber coins the phrase, "holy insecurity." This refers to the sense of risk involved at all times in the exercising of faith and trust. It has its parallel with Kierkegaard's Angst, but what is markedly different between the two men is their way of response. While Kierkegaard's seemed to be acquiescent and negative, Buber calls us to embrace this insecurity and not to avoid it, not even by way of religious and mystical experience, for then that makes of the religious an escapism from that very reality which is redeemable. This notion of "holy insecurity" marks an attempt by Buber to balance his earlier frightened response to the threat of infinity with a maturer existential trust.

In the year after the publication of Daniel, 1914, Buber wrote another short piece which further distilled his thoughts on mysticism. In "With a Monist" (27) Buber casts the argument in the form of a conversation in which he refuses to be identified as a mystic. What is interesting about this piece is that Buber grants to reason a claim which must be denied by the mystics, namely that of itself it grasps reality in its entirety. Further more, Buber confirms what the preceding discussion has already established,

Beyond this I lack the mystic's negation. The mystic manages, truly or apparently, to annihilate the entire world. But I am enormously concerned with just this world. And the reality of the experienced world is so much the more powerful the more powerfully I experience it and realise it. Reality is no fixed condition, but a quantity which can be heightened. Its magnitude is functionally dependent upon the intensity of our experiencing (28).

I have to point out in response to this statement the last emphasis on "the intensity of our experiencing". I have already had occasion to refer to Buber's claim to have gone beyond experience because of all the dangers involved in relying on experience itself as



giving access to reality. Here, in what is an important text, Buber heightens the efficacy of experience and isolates the intensity of it as a necessary quality. It is true, that the "overcoming of Erlebnis" is seen by Friedman to be at a later date, but (if it happened at all) it was before the writing of Ich und Du in 1923 (29). In the context of this discussion of mysticism, we cannot but conclude that for Buber mysticism remains a type of experience, and experience as such, remains the only medium through which the mystic can be engaged.

Friedman suggests that Daniel is simply a stage on Buber's road from mysticism to existentialism and that "With a Monist", is a stage further along that same road (30). What is apparent is that Buber does make a transition from those aspects of medieval mysticism which were the subject of his doctoral dissertation. The movement implied, is I submit, not one of passing from mysticism to existentialism, but of passing between forms of experience that manifest different kinds of mysticism. As I have shown, Buber developed a mystical perception which was life-enhancing rather than denying, and which sought to establish the uniqueness of the individual's potential rather than its negation. As indicated above, I shall return to the problem of the relationship between mysticism and existentialism, since I will argue in chapter 8 that Buber's Judaism was forged in the tension between these two and that for a proper understanding of Buber's Judaism an appreciation of that tension is crucial.

This brief survey of the general development of Buber's thought on mysticism provides a context and illuminates the state of mind in which he began his study of Hasidism. Inevitably much of what he was to find there influenced his thinking on mysticism as such. I want now to examine specifically the mysticism Buber encountered in this study. He drew on that tradition of Hasidism which established itself in Poland in the second half of the eighteenth century. But it is sometimes supposed that Hasidism originated in the eighteenth century

as a wholly new movement created, as it were, out of nothing. It is needful to bear in mind that the Polish phenomenon drew on earlier medieval traditions which Scholem describes as "the decisive event in the religious development of German Jewry" (31).

The central fact among the Hasidim of the Middle Ages was the cultivation of a mystical piety which it was hoped would lead to a sustained sense of the divine Presence. Behind this lay the older Merkabah mysticism of the "riders of the Chariot of God". (32) Merkabah mysticism was still in evidence in the Middle Ages and undoubtedly influenced the emergent Hasidic movement. However, while Merkabah mysticism emphasised the visionary and ecstatic faculties, the emphasis among the Hasidim was on living a life of devotion which found fulfilment in a vision of both God and his love. Buber, however, makes no mention of Merkabah mysticism as such, but it is likely that he incorporated it in the two traditions he describes as feeding the Hasidic movement, the "tradition of religious commandments, the ritual formation of Judaism", and the Kabbalah (33). It was the medieval emphasis on devotion and the vision of God and his love which makes the link to the movement of the eighteenth century, founded by Baal-Shem (34). Before I come to a consideration of Buber's interpretation of the Hasidism of the Baal-Shem, I need to say something about the second tradition which fed it, the Kabbalah.

In the twelfth century, in southern France and in Spain, there developed a form of mysticism which absorbed from Merkabah, the notion of the ten Sefiroth as personified attributes of God (35). Hasidism merged at the same time in Germany and the term Kabbalah (tradition) is confusingly used to cover Hasidism as well. Scholem advises that we restrict the term Kabbalah to the movement which began in Provence (36). This prophetic Kabbalism found its fullest expression in the work of Abraham Abulafia and in the compilation of the Zohar in Spain, which formed the link with the speculative Kabbalism of the sixteenth

century. It stressed the idea of the creative power of speech which power is obviously associated with the word of Scripture, but also in the sense that the word can be taken metaphorically to refer to everything in nature which "speaks" of the truths of God. This notion must have been of great interest to Buber (37). As mentioned above, this principle includes application of the Sefiroth.

We can summarise the character of speculative Kabbalism, by considering that the two supremely necessary factors were the love of God and the practice of prayer, the combination of which can attain for the individual union with God. This union finds its fulfilment in a future world but Kabbalism teaches that it is possible for the individual in this life to achieve a state of union (devekut) with God. Undoubtedly these aspects of speculative Kabbalism effected the character of eighteenth century Hasidism. There is one further influence needed to complete the picture and this stems from a form of Messianic Kabbalism which developed in reaction to the Jews' expulsion from Spain in 1492. Many migrated to the East and Palestine where Isaac Luria and Moses Cordovero founded at Sefed the Community of the Devout (38). The emphasis of this form of Kabbalism was on the processes of redemption which were concerned to consider the mysteries of creation. While focusing its system on the end of creation, it developed a complicated theory of the creation of the world. This was based on the idea that God created the world by withdrawing from a part of his own being; this notion of contraction (Tsimtsum) caused a form of primal vacuum to which He might return, but in which the real entities of creation could exist in their own right. What takes place then, is a continual and dual process of withdrawal and manifestation, or in other terms, exile and return. God's "light", Shekhinah, flows into certain vessels intended to be the media of its manifestation. These vessels correspond to the ten Sefiroth we have already encountered and in this process of creation, seven of the vessels were

shattered and the harmony of God's creation was thus destroyed. The creative light of God also fractured into sparks which remained to illuminate only parts of creation. Thus God's Shekhinah is in exile and we are left with a primordial dualism of light and darkness, good and evil contending for power and mastery (39). The implication of this is the potential that exists for the renewal of the broken unity and harmony of creation and man's role in partnership with God in achieving this. It is this responsibility which gives meaning to man's life. Buber puts it thus,

God's shekhinah descended from sphere to sphere, wandered from world to world, enveloped itself with shell upon shell, until it was in its furthest exile - us. In our world is God's fate is fulfilled. But our world is indeed the world of men (40).

As indicated above, it was these two ancient and central traditions of Jewish mysticism which were brought together in Hasidism, which in turn took from them what it found of relevance and reformed other aspects for its own purposes. Seltzer writes,

In Hasidism, for the first and only time, the Kabbalah provided the ideological basis for a broad and permanent movement of great vitality and diversity. The Kabbalah lost most of its esoteric character and was reshaped to emphasize its psychological and social rather than its speculative character (41).

Thus the Hasidim were opposed to all forms of asceticism, although ascetic practices remained in some instances) and men were encouraged to avoid heaviness of spirit and enjoy life with a pure heart. The whole of life must be consecrated to God and should be lived in the spirit of, on the one hand, service (avodah), and on the other hand, ecstasy (hitlahavut). Buber suggests that between these two there is an important distinction to be made; "Hitlahavut is embracing God beyond time and space. Avodah is the service of God in time and space" (42). Service derives its value from intention, avodah. In Lurianic Kabbalism this was concerned with the act of reparation for worship, but with the Hasidim it is associated with

the direction of the whole being and the whole life to God, so that the exile of the Shekhinah can be brought to an end and the scattered sparks re-united to become the creative light of God. For Buber, Kavana takes on several associated meanings mostly concerned with the idea of a goal; thus it is the mystery of a soul directed to a goal and directed to redeem the world; there is the Kavana of receiving and the Kavana of giving; and there is the Kavana of enjoyment and creation both of which should take place in holiness (43). The Hasidim worked towards the one goal of the restoration of unity in the cosmos and in the life of God, but more significantly that it was within the power of man to assist in the realisation of that goal, through the striving of a truly consecrated life and the force of prayer. When the Hasid prays it is to satisfy the needs of the Shekhinah, that is the unification of this with God; further to this, prayer is itself the means by which unity can be achieved in the present moment between the praying soul and the community. Buber tell us that the zaddik used to say of prayer;

I bind myself with the whole of Israel, with those who are greater than I that through them my thoughts may ascend, and with those who are lesser than I that they may be uplifted through me (44).

There are, however, aspects of this earlier Hasidism which Buber would have found difficult to fit into his scheme, especially a surviving element of asceticism requiring that renunciation of the world which Buber wanted to resist (45). At the other extreme, there were excesses of fervour which, however, may have been confused with those of Shabbateanism (46). If we add to these comments that faithfulness to the detail of tradition was never a strong point of Hasidism, we thereby glimpse its "non-conformity" a characteristic with which Buber, for a complex of reasons, would have been in sympathy. It must be pointed out that Hasidism, both in thirteenth century Germany and in eighteenth century Poland, was not a united movement and between its various sects and divisions, notably those

arising as a result of the partition of Poland, Buber could find most of the evidence which he sought in order to advocate that Judaism carried within it a tradition rich with the material for its own renewal. But also, Buber was able to find aspects of Hasidism which nourished ideas he had already begun to form. An example is Hasidism's psychological reshaping of Kabbalism; the notion of "inner bliss" is read by Buber as a disposition of the I to relate to the Thou and the concept of devekut was taken to be attainable in all of man's everyday activities. What emerged irresistibly for Buber was not only the notion that the profane could be made holy, but that devekut in daily living was realisable by each Jew according to his ability.

I have already mentioned by reference to Buber's childhood the early stage at which the notion of the "perfect man", and a doctrine of religious leadership, presented itself to him, and it was a feature of Hasidic ideology which influenced Buber deeply. Simply, it was based on the notion that the leader of a community should not be an intellectual isolated from the community he was there to serve. The zaddik while being a man elevated by the quality of his devekut, remains dependent on the community around him, just as that community looked to him to lead them towards greater enlightenment. It was with the teachings of the greatest of these zaddikim that Buber was concerned. It should be noted that the extraordinary individualism that pertained among the zaddikim, especially in the last quarter of the eighteenth century was a feature that would have appealed particularly to Buber and he attempted to express something of their distinctive personalities in his re-telling of their stories. In so doing, Buber not only passed on the teachings but preserved the image of the zaddik as one who represented the possibility of attaining the ideal.

I come now to the question of Buber's intentions for the translation and re-telling of the Hasidic message, and his

interpretation of it. Buber made very clear what he intended in re-casting the Hasidic stories. He was not concerned with describing the development of the Hasidic movement, its practices and its decline, but with interpreting the relation achieved by the Hasidim both to God and to the world (47). He was also clear about the nature of the sources which he translated and compiled; they took the form of notebooks, folk-books, pamphlets and such surviving oral tradition as he was able to find (48). Of his use of these sources Buber explained,

I have received it and have told it anew. I have not transcribed it like some piece of literature; I have not elaborated it like some fabulous material. I stand in the chain of narrators, a link between links; I tell once again the old stories, and if they sound new, it is because the new already lay dormant in them when they were told for the first time (49).

Buber wrote his first two books on Hasidism whilst in Italy during the years 1905 and 1906 (50). In 1906 he wrote to Samuel Horodetzky that his aim was,

not to accumulate new facts, but simply to give a new interpretation of the interconnections, a new synthetic presentation of Jewish mysticism and its creations and to make these creations known to the European public in as artistically pure form as possible (51).

However valid these intentions were, Buber's interpretation of Hasidism has been much criticised and the question has to be asked, to what extent has Buber succeeded in the task he set himself? Before attempting to answer this question I want to offer a summary of Buber's interpretation of the essential features of Hasidism and it is necessary to reiterate that his primary interest was the Hasidism of eighteenth century Poland.

I have already indicated that Buber resisted the surviving ascetic practices, such as fasting or other forms of penances. Indeed, he takes much of the Hasidic idea that one should not kill the "evil drive", the passion within the individual but turn it to the service of God (52). What follows from this is the essential point to Hasidism,

that man exerts influence on the eternal, and that this is done, not by special works, but by the intention with which he does all his work. It is the teaching of the hallowing of everyday (53).

Interestingly, Buber makes the point that Hasidism has no desire to eliminate any part of the traditional Law, since it teaches that there is nothing existing which cannot be subjected to the notion of right intention referred to above. Thus the practise of the Law in this way can achieve fulfilment. This does not of itself contradict the stand Buber adopted against the notion of Law as the content of revelation; it is simply his statement of the fact that those who feel compelled to practise the Law, must do so with the right attitude if that practise is to have any meaning (54). The object of the life lived out of the attitude of kavana is the achieving of jichud, unification. The unity of God is something both to be proclaimed, (since it is the centre of Jewish religion) and to be worked by man, in partnership with God;

Man produces the unity of God; this means that the unity of becoming, God's unity in creation, completes itself through him (55).

The essays which make up the "Interpretation of Hasidism", were written between 1921 and 1927. Buber published his book Ich und Du in 1923 and it is thus not unreasonable to suppose that his understanding of Hasidism was written into the dialogical philosophy which that work represents. I shall examine this specific influence in Chapters 6 and 7; the point I wish to make now, however, is to the reference in the above quotation of the idea of unity as something which is "becoming" and as such finds its completion in man. I suggest that this notion remains remarkably close to the concept of the "becoming God," which Buber had claimed to set aside before the writing of Ich und Du, and which I have already discussed. In fact, it would seem that the difference between the ideas that "God becomes" and that God's "unity becomes" through human instrumentality, lies only in the fact that the



method for achieving the former remains unspecified, while the method for achieving the latter has to do, as explained above, with living fully with the right intention, Kavana. I suggest, in fact, that trying to maintain this distinction is mere casuistry, since God and His unity, are by definition, one; Buber seems to make precisely this point himself, when he explains that the unification of God, since it must happen in this world, "must be produced by man" by unifying himself (56). A further significant point is that Buber associates with the notion of jichud the Hasidic understanding of history, which is "God's fate;" that is, history is the story of the success and failure of the realisation of unity by man in partnership with God. Hasidism, Buber suggests, framed the creed of Israel anew; that is it re-asserted with new vigour and insight the traditional views of holiness. In fact, it amends the ancient stress on the idea that the world is not God's place, by teaching that God is the "place of the world," where, nevertheless He lives. The Hasidic stress Buber wants to heighten has to do with this latter notion, namely the imminence of God, which turns the world into a sacrament (57). Buber develops this discussion by reference to the sacramental nature of the world deriving from the original Kabbalistic notion of the indwelling of the divine spark, and it is their re-unification which gives to daily life its sacramental potential. Thus does Buber reach a conclusion which has obvious appeal to him,

the Hassidic world is the concrete world as it is in this moment of a person's life; it is a world ready to be a sacrament, ready to carry a real act of redemption (58).

If the Hasidic view is that the whole of life is potentially sacramental, it can be seen how Buber was able to represent the Hasidic notion of holiness to have eliminated the traditional division between good and evil. He understands Hasidism to hold that nothing is unholy of itself and nothing in itself evil. This perception of Hasidism is of great importance to our understanding of Buber's

perception of Judaism, since that perception is based exactly on the elimination of the distinction between good and evil to the point of him being able to love the world. The possibility of man's union with the world and at the same time with God, came to Buber in almost visionary terms which struck deeply into his life;

Already from boyhood I had dimly perceived, even while I defended myself against seeing it, that I was inevitably destined to love the world (59).

The question of good and evil and their relationship to Buber's moral philosophy, I will develop in the next chapter. Before embarking on an examination of the criticism of Buber's interpretation of Hasidism, there is one further subject to be considered and that concerns his artistic intention in the re-telling of the Hasidic stories. I began this discussion by outlining Buber's own statements concerning his intentions; in respect of the stories, he was concerned to re-tell them as a link in a chain of story-tellers with the hope of communicating the life they contain. Few would deny Buber's achievement in this respect (60). The difficulty is that this achievement masks other problems; as Katz rightly points out, the literary quality of Buber's Tales of the Hasidim, is not

immune from philosophical, theological or historical criticism. Unless Buberians are willing to admit that Buber's 'Tales' are parallel, say, to historical fiction (61).

Katz's criticism of Buber's use of and interpretation of Hasidic sources is representative of contemporary discussions of this controversial aspect of Buber's work (62). In brief, Katz is concerned with Buber's treatment for the following reasons:

(i) He argues that Buber's interpretation rests entirely on the Hasidic stories and not at all on the Hasidic theoretical texts with consequent distortion of the historic-theological situation and thus of Hasidism itself (63).

(ii) Buber's interpretation of the sources he uses are individual, even idiosyncratic and heavily coloured by his own dialogical

philosophy. His re-working or "editing" of them is arbitrary and further distorts the Hasidic Weltanschauung.

Katz's criticism is a thorough-going and clear analysis of the problems and difficult to refute. But there are those who consider that Buber's more important contribution was to his attempts to take Hasidism to a wide public. One such was Simon Dubnow, the Russian-Jewish historian of Hasidism and of Polish Jewry. Of the first book, The Tales of Rabbi Nachman, (the great-grandson of the Baal-Shem) Dubnow wrote:

Your personal characterisation of R. Nachman has succeeded very well, only somewhat idealised, for Nachman was not free from the many errors of his Hasidic 'entourage' (64).

Even here, we see that approval is qualified and the "somewhat idealised" is a euphemistic way of suggesting that Buber ignored the darker side of Hasidism and the lives of the Zaddikim. Scholem's point must be kept in mind, namely that many of those who criticise Buber, have not been in the least aware that Buber's work is an interpretation" (65). Scholem himself, however, was under no such misconception and it was from him that Buber received during his life the weightiest criticisms of his Hasidic interpretations.

Like Katz, Scholem believes the theoretical teachings of Hasidism are the primary sources and form the proper context out of which the Tales should be interpreted; and, accordingly, he criticises Buber's exclusive use of the Tales. Scholem, however, seems to have changed the emphasis of his criticism of Buber over the years and no overt criticism appears in his main work of 1941, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism. In fact, concerning which Hasidic texts are primary he seems to have moved nearer Buber's own position; he writes,

Classical Hasidism was not the product of some theory or other, not even of a Kabbalistic doctrine, but of direct, spontaneous religious experience. Since the men who met with this special experience were for the most part simple and unsophisticated, the form in which they expressed their ideas and feelings was somewhat primitive compared to the older Kabbalah (66).

It was the simple, less sophisticated traditions of story-telling which Buber always contended were the more acute vehicle for the Hasidic message. Both for Scholem and Katz the question of the importance of texts to a proper and accurate understanding of Hasidism was one of only several considerations. But the criticism levelled against Buber concerning his choice of texts, serves to illustrate the now familiar and general charge of subjectivism. Both agree that Buber read into Hasidism his own philosophy.

In his closely-reasoned article, "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Buber-Scholem Controversy" (67), Kepnes re-examines Scholem's criticism by comparing the different purposes and hermeneutic principles of the two men. He points out that,

Scholem's own reading of Hasidism may lead us to ask why it is that he feels that his view of Hasidism is 'objective' and Buber's subjective and interpretative (68).

What is significant is Kepnes' account of the more contemporary hermeneutic theory of Gadamer who suggests that the meaning of any significant text goes beyond the contingencies of the author and that understanding of such a text is a process which is not only reproductive, (interpretative) but productive as well. There are interesting similarities to the theories of historical interpretation of Feuerbach and Dilthey which I have discussed in Chapter 3. The point, that the interpreter of historical texts can make that text live, seems to be confirmed by Gadamer's theory. He could not accept that the historian could be neutral and bring complete objectivity to his study. His idea that understanding takes place between the subject and object is close to the kind of inter-dependence Buber places in his category of "the between," especially when it is understood that in Buber's language, a text is a "Thou" to be encountered. Even so, Buber would agree that the subject brings to that, as to all encounters, the cultural terms of reference and even the presuppositions implied by being a self-conscious "I" (69).

Kepnes also refers to the somewhat obvious but sensible findings of Paul Ricoeur that in hermeneutics "explanation and understanding are not mutually exclusive; in fact they are complementary." Ricoeur suggest that explanation develops understanding and understanding precedes, accompanies and envelopes explanation. For a proper interpretation of texts, what we need are forms of explanation (70).

By combining the ideas of these two modern hermeneutical theorists, Kepnes concludes that Buber conveys the spirit and "present" meaning of Hasidism and brings out the relevance for contemporary audiences. Kepnes considers, however, that Buber would have benefited from a more conscientious examination of the historical-critical issues, the neglect of which formed the basis of Scholem's criticism (71).

I want now to outline something of Buber's own concerns about the interpretive task he set himself and with the content of that interpretation. His idealism certainly influenced his technique. In his treatment of Nachman, he aimed at nothing less than a unity of spirit with the Rabbi and tried to express that unity in the re-telling. With both Nachman and the Baal-Shem, however, Buber found that the process of telling the stories through simple and direct translation left them cluttered with an assortment of,

distortions of form and the insertions of vulgar rationalistic and utilitarian motifs by (the) disciples (72).

Buber remained uneasy about his handling of the Hasidic sources and even as late as 1955 he wrote in the Forward to a new edition of The legend of the Baal-Shem,

The existing material was so formless that I was tempted to deal with it as with some kind of subject matter for poetry. That I did not succumb to this temptation I owe to the power of the Hasidic point of view that I encountered in all these stories. Only some time after the original German edition appeared in 1907 was a stricter binding imposed on the relation which I had as an author to the tradition of the Hasidic legends - a binding that bid me reconstruct the intended occurrence of each individual story, no matter how crude and unwieldy it was, in the form in which it had been transmitted to us (73).

Yet Buber remained disappointed with his earliest efforts, despite the fact that Friedman, finds in the struggle he had with the problems of translating, something of the dialogical principle. He explains that Buber was concerned to find the "authentic" word and that this cannot be achieved by mechanical methods of translation (74).

We can see, therefore, that Buber saw himself as an instrument through which the legend was re-created and that his motive was above that of one embarked on a literary project. Put simply, Buber's interpretation of Hasidism and the selectivity he imposed on the sources had only one criterion: Hasidism suggested to him a way out of a modern dilemma. He believed the Hasidim had a vital contribution to make to the modern world and specifically to the condition and the problems of Judaism, as he understood them.

I did not yet know how to hold in check my inner inclination to transform the narrative material poetically. I did not, to be sure, bring in any alien motifs; still I did not listen attentively enough to the crude and ungainly but living folk-tone which could be heard from this material ... The need, in the face of misunderstanding, to point out the purity and loftiness of Hasidism led me to pay all too little attention to its popular vitality (75).

His first major publication of Hasidic teaching was that of 1907, in which he gathered together his translation and interpretation of the life and twenty stories of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezar, who was called the Baal-Shem, that is, the master of God's Name, and who lived from about 1700 to 1760, mostly in Poland and Wolhynia (76).

In the foregoing discussion, I have pointed out that it was the Baal-Shem's creative adaptation of Kabbalism that was one of the features which so interested Buber. The Baal-Shem took up that more ancient notion of the creative divine sparks which long to be reunited with the divine source from which they have been separated. To recapitulate briefly: This "doctrine of the sparks" inextricably involves heaven and earth together by showing that it is both within the power of man and his main responsibility to redeem this basic

fracturing of creation's original unity. The Baal-Shem's principal contribution was to make generally available what had hitherto been a somewhat esoteric doctrine: that every part and form of existence was impregnated with a spark of the divine that the whole of life was potentially holy and that it is up to every man, however humble his status and natural gifts may be, to realise the potential of this holiness through his actions.

From what already has been said of Buber's moral stringency and idealism in his involvement in Zionist politics, and his shift in emphasis from the mystical negation of the self and the world to the affirmation of both, it can be judged how revelatory was his discovery of this teaching of the Baal-Shem. Buber, who had said that he 'professed Judaism before he knew it', found in the resurgent, but not revivalist (77) Jewish movement of Hasidism a vindication of much that he was already formulating in the development of his philosophy. It was the principle of the "hallowing" of the daily life which was for Buber the most important feature of Hasidism where the emphasis was on the individual's own responsibility and participation in the process of hallowing.

In Hasidism the hallowing extends fundamentally to the natural and social life. Here alone the whole man, as God has created him, enters into the hallowing (78).

Buber was fully conversant with Hasidic history and with the main traditions of Judaism that fed it, which I have outlined above. What concerned him was what he called,

the inner dialectic of the Hasidic movement between an unoriginal Kabbalism remaining in the realm of 'spiritual' men and a life with the world of unheard-of originality in the way it seized generation after generation of the people (79).

The unoriginal tradition to which Buber here refers is established early in the development of Jewish thought by way of a gnostic influence. It represented the view that in order to achieve contact with God one must be taken out of the confines of earthly existence

and elevated into the realm of pure spirit. The alternative view, is the one already introduced in the forgoing discussion, and the one considered by Buber to be "of unheard-of originality," namely, that man can be with God, by the "hallowing," of each thought and action, by dedicating each moment, each aspect of daily life, to God, "by doing what one does with the right kavana, with dedication to God, and thus hallowing it" (80). Buber's study of Hasidism disclosed that,

The first of these views, that of spiritualisation, we first find in Hasidism in its great thinker, the Maggid of Mezritch, the second, that of the hallowing of all life, we find in his teacher, the Baal-Shem-Tov (81).

Buber argues that the central position of the zaddik is not itself an object of this dialectic, but from the beginning of the movement has been the common and sustaining element. In fact there are, he explains, two types of zaddikim to be distinguished,

the teacher whose decisive effect is on his disciples and the zaddik who is essentially a helper and whose decisive effect is on the broad circle of his Hasidim. That is no secondary distinction but one in which the inner dialectic finds expression: the first kind belongs more to the side of the spiritualising, the second more to the other, that of realizing. In the person of the Baal-Shem both are still united, after him they go apart (82).

It is on the basis of this inner dialectic of Hasidism and the distinctions made from it, that Buber makes the selection of the material which forms the basis of his writings on the subject. He has chosen as significant those sources which seem to him to support the "hallowing" and "realising" aspect of Hasidism, between what he believes to be an unoriginal aspect (better perhaps, primary aspect, since it must have been and always would be present in Judaism) represented by Kabbalistic teaching. This, as indicated above, confined the sphere of man's religious activity to the "spiritual" and placed its emphasis on other-worldly considerations. The new, wholly original insight, eliminates the distinctions between the spiritual and material realms in terms of priorities, and as we have seen heretofore between the traditional dualisms represented by the notions



of the sacred and the secular, and thus also by good and evil. The emphasis is consequently shifted, to this world and to this life.

To explain fully Buber's preoccupation with this aspect of Hasidism I need to add one further and important element and that concerns the question of redemption and Messianism. Some have seen in Buber's understanding of the Hasidic message of redemption a form of "atomistic ideology", of automessianism, even an "anti-messianic world-view" (83). In fact Buber takes up a very different position both in his understanding of Hasidism and in other writings (84). So far as the present discussion is concerned he is unequivocal. He interprets the Hasidic message being that each man can participate in the work of the world's redemption but no one man can effect it. Hasidism contains, however, a tension in its own inner dialectic. There is the view that God is to be influenced by magical means; alternatively is the view that redemption can only be effected by man through a turning (t'shuvah) of his whole being to God, after which everything that he does, he does for God. What man effects in this way is the capacity of the world to be redeemed; he helps create a disposition for redemption, by bringing the world nearer to God's influence (85).

What is emerging here is important to the substance of my thesis since it concerns Buber's personal sense of what it means to be Jewish. What I will discuss fully in later chapters, but what is in one sense a theme running throughout his work, is Buber's concern with unity, with an essential and ontological wholeness, with a suspicion towards any form of dualism, especially that which is based on a basic and irreconcilable division of sacred and profane spheres. For example, his ethical system stems from the notion of reconciling the "good and the evil urges" (86), that both can be brought into the service of God. This is already apparent in his treatment of Hasidism. His inclination to set aside the magical/mystical aspects of Hasidism which originate in Kabbalistic doctrine is, as I have shown, wholly

consistent with his claim to disavow mysticism, which claim I have, and will continue to question.

Because the daily life of the Jew was thus endowed with a redemptive potential and possibility, the process of freeing or returning the sparks to their divine source was a messianic process, since of itself it promoted the Messianic Era. Buber therefore identifies himself with the Hasidic view, that any concept of messianism which requires differentiation between one man and another, or even between one age and another, is fallacious, since it is given to the whole of mankind to participate in "messianic action" which turns the whole of life towards God. Life thus becomes a continuously redemptive process (87).

Malcolm Diamond considers that the most profound application of the Hasidic doctrine of the sparks is in its understanding of love and that in Hasidism the connection between the love of God and the love of one's neighbour is given new and challenging significance. He quotes a Zaddik:

The real love of God should begin with the love of men. And if someone should tell you that he has love of God but has no love of men, then know that he is lying (88).

and Diamond comments on the striking similarity between these words and those found in the first Letter of John, 4.20.

'If any man says, I love God, and hates his brother he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.' Hasidism carries this emphasis on the importance of the second commandment still further, by demonstrating that the two commandments, that we love God and the neighbour, are both contained in the second, which does not end with the phrase, 'as thyself', but with the words: 'I am the Lord (89).

It is in Buber's interpretation of these biblical commandments that Hasidic and biblical teaching merge with his own dialogical philosophy. In Two Types of Faith (90), he expresses his uncertainty of the correctness of the translation from the Septuagint of the word rendered "as yourself", in the commandment that man should love his enemies. The term in question is Re'ah which in the Septuagint is

rendered, "the one near by, the near." Buber understands this to mean the one to whom I stand in an immediate and reciprocal relationship. Leviticus 19.18, has it, "Love your fellow as yourself: I am the Lord," to which Buber compares, Matthew 22.39, "Be lovingly disposed towards men with whom thou hast to do at any time in the course of thy life." What concerns Buber is that,

an attitude is meant and not a feeling: the feeling of love between men does not in general allow its object to be prescribed; whereas an attitude of loving-kindness toward a fellow creature can indeed be commanded to a man (91).

The above was written in 1949/50 many years after Buber's thinking had passed through the refracting prism of his dialogical philosophy, but his earlier understanding of Hasidic teaching on love was clearly influential in the years leading to 1923 and I and Thou. From the Hasidim Buber understood that love should be manifest in the I-Thou attitude and this essential turning to the other became the pivot of his concept of dialogue. Inasmuch as to love "the other" is the same as loving God, it is discernible that "the other" is understood as a unique being by a self, an "I", that knows itself to be unique.

While the energy of later Hasidism can be seen historically as a reaction to and adaptation of the teachings of the Kabbalah, even as the making of Kabbalism into a popular movement (92), Diamond points out that,

it was the Rabbinic tradition that, for over two thousand years, maintained the unity and integrity of Judaism, first in Palestine and then in the many countries of the Diaspora (93).

It must be said, however that Hasidism was to some extent a reaction to rabbinical intellectualisation, which by the period of the Talmud-Shem had changed the study of Torah into an esoteric and complex occupation that had little to do with the daily life of the ordinary Jew. It was also a movement that gave precedence to personality over doctrine, and to the immediacy of individual religious experience (94). While the appeal of this latter notion for Buber is

understandable, it is important to show that his response to the former view, that of the over-intellectualisation of rabbinical teaching, was unfortunately subjected to the general error of treating legalism as the rabbinic norm, even its ideal, rather than an abuse of its tradition. It is odd, for example, that Buber does not seem to acknowledge the implication of the fact that many of the sources of the Hasidic stories he so much venerated were themselves Rabbis, just as were many of the subjects of those stories. It is this misconception that Buber carries to his earliest writings on Judaism, which I review in the following chapter. He later altered this view when he recognised that the Rabbis teach that the acts of Torah are to be performed Lishmah, that is, "for the sake of the Name" (95). Thus does Buber carry forward the essential criterion of right attitude implicit in the I-Thou relationship.

Nevertheless, in his first encounter with Hasidism, Buber saw that while it was concerned with giving to Halakah the necessary ingredient of right intention, it took that further and vital step, which as I have already shown was to concern the hallowing of every act by which means all of life was to be consecrated. Buber's opening dialogical prescription in I and Thou seems therefore to infuse his primary word-pairs, "I-Thou", and "I-It", with the Hasidic ideal of coming to every moment, act and relationship with the right attitude:

To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude. The attitude of man is twofold, in accordance with the twofold nature of the primary words which he speaks (96).

But this formulation, as noted in the Introduction, suggest by its twofold nature, an inbuilt problem for Buber's preoccupation with infinity. I shall discuss this in Chapter 6.

One of the qualities of Hasidism which first attracted Buber was that of fervent piety (97). For Buber the Hasidic notion of fervour lifts the believer out of the mundane and alleviates the burden of routine. In his collection of the tales of the later masters of

Hasidism, Buber includes the teaching of the Rabbi of Kobryn:

God says to man, as he said to Moses: 'Put off thy shoes from thy feet' - put off the habitual which encloses your foot, and you will know that the place on which you are now standing is holy ground. For there is no rung of human life on which we cannot find the holiness of God everywhere and at all times (98).

That the object of this fervour was to be found within man's present existence was also one of the features which Buber saw as distinguishing Hasidism from those religions which seek to negate the life of this world. Judaism, in contradistinction to some other religions,

teaches that what a man does, now and here, with holy intent, is no less important, no less true than the life in the world to come. This doctrine has found its fullest expression in Hasidism (99).

Friedman suggest that "this was one of the truly decisive moments in Buber's life" (100), when beyond the "ternary fire" of Jacob Boehme, he felt the fire and spirit of the Baal-Shem. In this experience the "primally Jewish" disclosed itself to him; the primally Jewish reality of "deed" he saw as the primal human reality; the childhood memory of the zaddik and his community and the notion of the perfected man summoned him to proclaim to the world, the Hasidic message (101).

A difficulty Buber encountered in his interpretation of Hasidism concerned the movement's affirmation of the whole of life, an affirmation which appears to contradict the traditional Jewish distinction between the sacred and the profane. So much of Jewish orthopraxy seems to be based on laws and customs designed, if not to harden the edges of these categories, at least to recognise their real existence and significance. If, for example, one considers the dietary laws, the ancient priestly codes concerning purity and impurity, and the service of Habdalah which ends the Sabbath with, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who makest a distinction between holy and profane" (102), the distinction itself, seems inviolable and for Buber

whose philosophy, as mentioned above, centred on the notion of the realisation of an essential unity, this distinction was troublesome. His answer is to show that Hasidism teaches that the categories of sacred and profane are provisional. In an essay which began life in 1930 as a speech to one of the four German Christian missions to the Jews (103) Buber wrote of the Law which differentiates between the holy and the profane and thus maintains those very distinctions that he understood to have been eliminated by the Hasidic emphasis on "all-sanctification", the profane simply being what is "not yet sanctified"; the implication being that one does not serve God only with the spirit, but with the whole mind, body and nature (104).

What Buber seems to have missed is that aspect of Hasidism which delighted in the observation of Law when observed through that attitude associated with Kavana, and I will return to this seeming contradiction. We can see, however, that the implications for the halakhic life of the Jew are considerable. Intriguingly, Buber (and Hasidism) seems not far from the position taken by Soloveitchik;

According to the outlook of Halakhah, the service of God (with the exception of the study of the Torah) can be carried out only through the implementation, the actualisation of its principles in the real world. The ideal of righteousness is the guiding light of this world-view. Halakhic man's most fervent desire is the perfection of the world under the dominion of righteousness and loving-kindness - the realisation of the a priori, ideal creation, whose name is Torah (or Halakhah), in the realm of concrete life (105).

It must be said, however, that Soloveitchik himself is consistent with traditional Rabbinic understanding of the place and function of halakhah; which point implies that in spirit (or attitudes) at least, Buber was not so far removed from the traditions for which he harboured so much suspicion.

I can now make the following summary:

i) Since 1910 when Buber "withdrew" to embark on this study, he did not aim to "present a historically or hermeneutically comprehensive presentation of Hasidism"; even so, his claim is that,

while his process was selective, "that principle of selection did not originate in a subjective preference" but was determined by the inner dialectic he found within the subject (106).

ii) Buber was fully conversant with the history of Hasidism in all its aspects; he did not interpret it as something which was in any way new and agreed with Scholem's contention that,

it produced no new mystical doctrine extending in any essential points beyond the Kabbalistic tradition. regarded from the standpoint of its theories, Hasidism is, in fact, pure epigone (107).

iii) The criteria Buber brought to his interpretation of Hasidism and the selection of the sources he used to that end he claims to bring to his work on Judaism in general. Thus he states,

I have dealt with that in the life and teaching of Judaism which, according to my insight, is its proper truth and is decisive for its function in the previous and future history of the human spirit (108).

iv) This being so, Buber aims always to distinguish between those aspects of Jewish religious tradition which he believes are essential to a living faith worked out in daily life, and those which in his view serve as a model and a tradition which for many fail to give access to a living experience of the living God. He recognises that,

this attitude of mine includes valuation from the base up; but this valuation is one which has its origin in the immovable central existence of values. Since I have attained to the maturity of this insight, I have not made use of a filter; I became a filter (109).

v) While the problem remains, concerning Buber's practice as a Jew, in spirit at least Buber's interpretation of Hasidism seems not far removed from orthodox Jewish belief;

Meet the world with the fullness of your being and you shall meet Him. That He Himself accepts from your hands what you have to give to the world is His mercy. If you wish to believe, love! (110).

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5.

1. Buber, "Judaism and the Jews", p20 On Judaism.
2. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.1 p76 quoting a letter to Weizmann. Friedman does not give further details of the source.
3. ibid.
4. Buber, Meetings, p38.
5. Friedman, op. cit. p77.
6. Kohn, Martin Buber. pp29-33 etc.
7. See "Notes on Chapter 3", 166.
8. Buber, Ueber Jacob Boehme Wiener Rundschau Vol.5 No.12, June 15th., 1901, p251-253. Buber is quoting Feuerbach, Basic Principles of Philosophy of the Future, p71.
9. Buber, "What is Man?" in Between Man and Man. pp181-182.
10. See "Notes for Chapter", 166 and discussion in the text p
1. Buber, "What is Man?", pp184-85.  
This essay was based on an inaugural course of lectures which Buber delivered as Professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1938.
2. ibid.
3. Meister Eckhart, Talks of Instruction, trans. R.B.Blakney, p9.
4. Buber, "The Origins and Meaning of Hasidism", in Mamre: Essays in Religion, p130.
5. A Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Jennifer Speake, p239.  
Dictionary of Religions, ed. John R. Hinnells, p224.
6. Boehme, Jacob, "Second Epistle" The Confessions of Jacob Boehme, ed. W.S. Palmer, p12f.
7. Buber, Ich und Du, p128-29.
8. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.1 p87.
9. Buber, "What is Man?" Between Man and Man. p208f
10. Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao," Pointing the Way, p31.
1. Tao-te-ching, Orbis, London, 1979.
2. Ling, Trevor, A History of Religion East and West, p104-5.  
Zaehner, R.C. The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths, p385.
3. Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao", op.cit p45-46.
4. Ling, op.cit. p106.
5. A Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Jennifer Speake, p349.



26. Buber, "The Teaching of the Tao", op.cit. p50.
27. Buber, Daniel: Dialogues on Realisation, p27f.
28. Buber, "With a Monist," Pointing the Way, p25f.
29. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.1, p319f.
30. Friedman, op. cit. p29.
31. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p81.
32. The word Merkabah means chariot and its application to mysticism is derived from Ezekiel's vision of the chariot of God as described in the first chapter of his prophecy. The mysteries of Merkabah mysticism were concerned with an ecstatic consciousness of the divine presence. The riders of the Merkabah had to fit themselves for their ascent to God by ascetic practices associated with fasting and ablutions. There is no thought in this tradition of union with God but only of being in God's presence where a man might be transformed into an angelic being. See, Scholem, op.cit, p84f, 89f, 206f, etc., and Spencer, Mysticism in World Religion, p175-181.
33. Buber, "The Interpretation of Hasidism", Mamre: Essays in Religion, p69.
34. Israel Baal Shem "master of the name" (of God) was born in 1700 and he and his disciples formed the nucleus of a religious reawakening. He was succeeded by as leader by Rabbi Baer of Meseritz, "the great Maggid" (preacher) who sent out missionaries throughout the Ukraine from whence the movement spread rapidly to Eastern Europe.
5. The best-know book belonging to the early Merkabah mysticism was the Sefer Yetsirah (The Book of Creation) probably compiled between the 3rd and 6th. centuries. The book speaks of thirty-two mysterious paths represented by the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten Sefiroth. See Scholem op.cit. pp213-22.
6. Scholem, op.cit. p100.
7. The Zohar's starting point is the principle underlying all Kabbalism, that of the creative power of speech. This aspect taken over by Hasidism must have interested Buber, and possibly influenced his own concept of the "genuine word." The Zohar's teaching that the fire of wrath, which was tempored by God's mercy, to become the fire of Hell, was taken up Jacob Boehme in the seventeenth century. See Spencer op.cit. p193.
8. Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pp462-467.
9. ibid. and Scholem, op.cit Chapter 7, p244f.
0. Buber, op.cit. p73.
1. Seltzer, op.cit. p487.
2. Buber, The Legend of the Baal-Shem, p23.
3. Buber, op.cit. p33-40.

44. Buber, op.cit p29.
45. Scholem, op.cit pp91-93.
46. Shabbatianism, refers to the beliefs and practices of a movement associated with Shabbatai-Tzvi (1626-76), a pretending Messiah. His followers were imbued with Lurianic ideas about mystical eschatology.
47. Buber, The Legend of the Baal-Shem, Introduction, p9.
48. ibid. p10
49. ibid.
50. Friedman, op. cit. p98.
51. Friedman, op. cit. p101 quoting Buber Briefwechsel 1. p244 #110.
52. Buber, "The Interpretation of Hasidism" Mamre:Essays in Religion, p77.
53. ibid. p78. My emphasis.
54. ibid. p79.
55. ibid. p84.
56. ibid. p88.
57. ibid. p105.
58. ibid. p106.
59. ibid. p108.
60. See for example Scholem, op.cit., pp325, 327, 342, 349, 354. Even Katz, who is primarily concerned with a critical examination of Buber's use of Hasidic sources, acknowledges his effort over sixty years to carry the inner meaning of Hasidism to the modern world. See Post-Holocaust Dialogues, p52. Further to this see, Kerényi's essay, "Martin Buber as Classical Author," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p627f.
61. Katz, op. cit., p87.
62. ibid. pp52-93.
63. Hasidic theoretical texts included in the early stages of the movement's development Kabbalistic books such as the Zohar compiled in 13th. century Spain. Of the texts arising out of Hasidism itself, the most significant are Toledot Yaakov Yosef, "The Generations of Jacob Joseph", 1782, by Jacob Joseph of Polnoye, and the Qedushat Levi, "The Holiness of Levi" 1798, by Levi Isaac of Berdichev.
64. Friedman, op. cit. quoting Buber Briefwechsel 1 p252f #134, p101.
65. Scholem, op. cit., p347.
66. ibid.

67. Kepnes, "A Hermeneutic Approach to the Buber-Scholem Controversy", Journal of Jewish Studies, Vol. XXXVIII, No.1. Spring 1987 p81; quoting Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism, p230, translated by M. Meyer, pp81-98.

68. *ibid.* p91.

69. Gadamer, Hans-Georg, Truth and Method, p229f.

70. Ricoeur, Paul, Interpretation Theory, chapter 4, and "Explanation and Understanding" in The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, p165f.

I would like to point out that the work of Gadamer and Ricoeur have been familiar to me for some time and I have read most of their publications. However, I would not have thought to have applied their ideas to Buber's interpretation of Hasidic texts and for this reference I am indebted to Kepnes's essay indicated in note 67 above.

71. Kepnes *op. cit.* p95.

72. Buber, "My Way to Hasidism", Hasidism and Modern Man p53.

73. Buber, The Legend of Baal-Shem, Introduction, pp7-8

74. Friedman, *op.cit.*, p103.

75. Buber, "My Way to Hasidism," *op. cit.* p53 & p59,

76. Buber, The Legend of Baal-Shem, Introduction, p9.

77. Buber, Martin, "Replies to My Critics," p732, The Philosophy of Martin Buber.

78. Buber, "Replies to my Critics," *op. cit.* p732.

79. *ibid.* p737.

80. *ibid.* p733.

81. *ibid.*

82. *ibid.* p738.

83. Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Man's Relation to God & World in Buber's Rendering of the Hasidic Teaching," p416-417 The Philosophy of Martin Buber". Schatz-Uffenheimer makes an application of the idea of Wittgenstein's and Russell's that truth is built up of units of meaning that in this context, ideologies, utopias and the messianic age can be constructed bit by bit from the realising of the divine sparks.

84. Cf. Buber, I and Thou, For the Sake of Heaven, etc., etc.

85. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," *op. cit.* p739.

86. Buber, Images of Good and Evil, translated by Michael Bullock.

87. Buber "The Interpretation of Hasidism," Mamre: Essays in Religion, p121.

88. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p21.
89. *ibid.*
90. Buber, Two Types of Faith, translated by N.P.Goldhawk.
91. *ibid.* p69.
92. Scholem, *op. cit.* p329.
93. Diamond, *op. cit.* p122.
94. Scholem G. *op. cit.* p329f.
95. Buber, Two Types of Faith, pp92-93 *op cit.*
96. Buber, I and Thou, p3.
97. Diamond, *op. cit.* p135.
98. Buber, Tales of the Hasidim: The Later Masters, translated by Olga Marx, p170.
99. Buber, Way of Man According to the Teaching of Hasidism, p39.
100. Friedman, Life and Works, Vol.I p97.
101. Buber, "My Way to Hasidism," *op. cit.* p59.
102. The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, Fifteenth edition, p217.
103. Friedman, *op. cit.* Vol.II p117.
104. Buber, "Two Foci of the Jewish Soul," Israel & the World, p34.
105. Soloveitchik, Halakhic Man, translated by Lawrence Kaplan, p94.
106. Buber, "Replies to My Critics," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p731.
107. *ibid.* p732, & Scholem, G. *op. cit.* p338.
108. *ibid.* p731.
109. *ibid.* p731 & p737
110. Buber, "The Silent Question," pp212-213, On Judaism.

## 6. I AND THOU.

My examination of Buber's involvement in Zionism and his discovery of Hasidism has established the two basic building-blocks of the rehabilitation of his Jewish faith. The early addresses Buber delivered on Judaism were written before the publication of Ich und Du in 1923, that is they were given between 1909 and 1918. The later addresses date from the time when he left Germany in 1938 to live in Palestine, that is from 1938 to 1951. However, it is of great importance to keep in mind that in the publication of the collected earlier addresses in 1923, Buber provided a new Preface, in which many of his earlier statements about Judaism were qualified in the light of the dialogical philosophy represented by Ich und Du which itself was subject to some further explanation in 1957 in a Postscript to a new edition of that year. For these reasons, I intend in this and in the following chapter to be concerned with Buber's dialogical philosophy. I will then be in a position to make an examination of Buber's perception of Judaism.

### 1). Preliminary Considerations.

Horwitz has shown that the undated plan which Kaufmann includes in the introduction to his translation of I and Thou, is not in fact as early as he suggests, namely 1916, (1) but a sketch of possible contents did exist by 1919. (2) Yet clearly there is a sense in which most of Buber's early writings so far considered are in some way a preparation for I and Thou. As early as 1907 in his introduction to the The Legend of The Baal-Shem Buber wrote:-

The legend is the myth of I and Thou, of the caller and the called, the finite which enters into the infinite and the infinite which has need of the finite. (3)

The earlier influences on Buber have already been considered but it is useful here to add some treatment of Buber's relationship to

Rosenzweig, which I will also consider more fully in Chapter 8. Buber acknowledged the personal nature of their relationship in his acceptance of Rosenzweig's invitation to lecture at the Frankfurt Lehrhaus in 1921: "Of course, I shall undertake the lectures if I can thereby fulfil a personal wish of yours". (4) The series of lectures were entitled, "Religion as Presence." In his Afterword on The History of the Dialogical Principle, Buber explained that he was able to set about the final version of I and Thou.

after I had set forth my train of thought in a course that I gave at the Freie Jüdisches Lehrhaus in Frankfurt (5).

Some of these lectures form an earlier version of sections of the first and third Parts of "I and Thou" (6). Friedman explains, that in the lectures,

Buber had an 'It world' and a 'Thou world' instead of 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' but in the answer to a question Buber already had begun to speak of 'basic words' (7).

Just before beginning the lectures Buber had read for the first time Rosenzweig's The Star of Redemption and discussion of this and its relation to the lectures themselves preoccupied the two men (8). There was much of which Buber was critical, "especially extreme systematizing which runs completely against the grain of his thought" (9). Nor could he agree with Rosenzweig's premise that man is dependent on God's self-revelation for his own response, that is, that man's response to God is a consequence of God's initiative and that dialogue must exist between God and man before it can happen between man and man (10) And yet, in August 1921 Buber wrote to Rosenzweig that no page of the The Star was alien to him, no matter how far his own opinion might be from it" (11).

There exists the possibility discussed by Horwitz (12), that Buber's discussions with Rosenzweig at this period both about "The Star" and the Lehrhaus lectures actually influenced the concept of dialogue central to Buber's I and Thou and more particularly that it led to a modification of Buber's actual vocabulary by causing him to

eliminate words such as "realisation" and "orientation." Friedman concedes that the language of the Lehrhaus lectures is closer to that of Daniel than of I and Thou but concludes that "Rosenzweig's possible role in the process whereby Buber shed the language of Daniel is not important" (13). While of course it is important, it is sufficient for my purpose simply to draw attention to the arguments which illuminate the milieu in which the final writing of "I and Thou" took place.

What must be understood here is the fundamental difference that existed between Rosenzweig and Buber on the matter of what Zwiesprache actually is. According to Friedman, "Dialogue does not just mean speech for Buber, as it does for Rosenzweig" (14). Buber's concept of dialogue seems to embrace the whole notion of "response" in which the speech-content of dialogue becomes metaphorical before, for example, a work of art or nature. That language itself becomes more clearly the medium of dialogue in "I and Thou" is again probably due to Rosenzweig's influence (15), but for Buber, language is only ever one of the many forms of dialogue man can have with the world.

As Buber read The Star of Redemption for the first time, Rosenzweig was reading the galley proofs of I and Thou and in September of 1922 he sent Buber a criticism of the first part of the book.

In the I-It you give the I-Thou a cripple as an opponent. The 'basic word I-It' cannot, of course, be spoken with the whole being. It is just not a basic word (16).

Rosenzweig in fact suggested two other basic words, the HE-it of God the Creator over against the created world and the We-It, which might form a basic word for a community rightly bound together in its response to authentic experience. As Berkovits put it in his summary of what he calls Buber's testimony: "there is no way from I-Thou to We to We-Thou, no bridge between mutuality of relation and the community or society" (17).

This singularity of the I-Thou, (especially when it is remembered that Buber insists that an I-It may be changed into an I-Thou,) is of importance in understanding Buber's Jewish self-definition. I have noted in previous discussions that Buber seems to find difficulty in making a relationship between his own, subjectively held views and the need to have these validated by some form of objective terms of reference, such as, for example the consensus of the group to which he belongs. Thus, Berkovits in pointing out the lack of an "I-We", as representing a primary attitude, may have provided us with the root the root for Buber's individualistic approach both to tradition and to consensus, as to what in terms of "people" and "community" comprises true Judaism. Whether this is something Rosenzweig sensed I can only speculate about here, but that he should sense this singularity and its implications in a first reading of "I and Thou" is consistent with his own more central place in the Jewish tradition and to his being more open than Buber to the possibility that therein is found the message of God's revelation of himself. What seems to emerge from this continuing correspondence is that,

Rosenzweig's philosophy begins with 'a leap of faith', Buber in contrast, places philosophical anthropology and not theology at the centre of his philosophy (18).

Yet basic theological concerns remain central to I and Thou, especially that of creation and the relationship between God and nature. As early as 1900 in his essay on Jacob Boehme, Buber talks about having a feeling of unity with nature in general and with particular objects, such as the celebrated Tree of I and Thou (19). Buber uses the notion of unity in the early essay to express the idea of man as microcosmic; in his essay of 1909, "Ecstasy and Confession" (20), he talks of the "oneness" between the "I" and the World, and in Hasidic Tales written in 1913, the unity is that which is created and achieved in the world. In the work under consideration man's unity with objects in nature is used to illustrate the I-Thou relation.



Friedman makes the point that the emotional content of the experience of unity as expressed in the Boehme essay of 1900 and in "I and Thou" of 1923 are "identical!" (21). It seems however that a closer reading would suggest that Buber in his earlier writing sought to indicate the identity of something that is more than just emotional and was concerned that the "experience" of unity should contain ground from which expression of that unity might be given in the lived concrete of daily life. Buber completed a neat circle in his essay on Boehme by suggesting that the dialectic which man can have with nature is reciprocal. I have established in chapter 3 the significance of Buber stating in the essay that this dialectic finds its fullest expression in Feuerbach's statement "Man with man - the unity of I and Thou - is God," in this case where the "I" is the person and the "Thou" is some object in nature which the "I" experiences in full mutuality (22). Indeed it is "nature" that seems here to be the pivot of the differences between Rosenzweig and Buber. Friedman wants to correlate Rosenzweig's "It" which can be spoken with the whole being, to Buber's I-Thou relationship with nature. For Buber, God speaks his word to man in Creation through nature and thus nature in its immediacy is Thou and as such is "other." But Rosenzweig, in fact, understands dialogue only in terms of speech and thus has no place for an I-Thou relationship with nature (23). Rosenzweig takes up a stance which enables him to consider God's relationship to nature from God's point of view. He can postulate therefore the basic word "HE-It", and the "It" here is in fact Buber's Thou. On the other hand Buber's existentially based I-Thou relationship provides the basis for the I-It relation and not as Rosenzweig would have it, from an a priori theological revelation.

A further discussion of this influence through friendship, meeting and correspondence between Buber and Rosenzweig will be taken up in chapter 8. But there is no doubt that Buber's stance over against

Rosenzweig heightened not only his sense of loneliness but also a feeling of isolation. In his response to Rosenzweig's criticism Buber suggested that he may find in the Second part of the book that he had,

done less injustice to IT and in the Third part that HE and WE existed as realities. Of course, I have neither the sanction to speak of a decisive HE nor the authority to speak of a decisive WE. Thus I must confess it - not conceal my nakedness and my loneliness (24).

It is well known that many of the problems one encounters in trying to understand and unravel Buber's thought concerned the nature of his language, always literary, frequently poetic and idiosyncratic. It is worth examining some of the basic terms Buber uses and the way in which they are handled by his different translators. Friedman, both in his Life of Dialogue and in his three volume Martin Buber's life and Work (25) frequently provides his own translation of the sources he uses. It is not always apparent which translation is being used. In the following brief consideration, I am drawing on Friedman's own translation of passages of I and Thou and on the translations of Walter Kaufmann, Ronald Gregor Smith and Alexander Kohanski. The German edition I am using (26) contains the all important Nachwort of October 1957, but omits the original inscription from Goethe,

So hab ich endlich von dir erharret: In allen Elementen  
Gottes Gegenwart. So waiting I have won from you the end:  
God's presence in each element (27).

Kaufmann argues, that in I and Thou, the emphasis does not in fact fall on "each element": "Asked why he had deleted it, Buber said: because it could be misunderstood" (28). The misunderstanding concerns the possible charge of pantheism and there are other examples of Buber's later revisions of earlier work aimed at clearing up this ambiguity (29). In fact, as is suggested by Greta Schaeder, the early use of this inscription may have no other significance than the "you" being a cryptic reference and dedication to Buber's wife (30). Particularly with respect to I and Thou, Buber's German is difficult to translate. Kaufmann frequently has to qualify his translation with

detailed footnotes some of which simply point out the extreme difficulty, even the impossibility of translating Buber's German. For example of,

Alle Versenkungslehre gründet in dem gigantischen Wahn des in sich zurückgebogen menschlichen Geistes; er geschehe im Menschen. In Wahrheit geschieht er vom Menschen aus - zwischen dem Menschen und Dem, was nicht er ist.

Kaufmann says,

These locutions are as extraordinary in German as they are in English. In the original, this is one of the most baffling sentences in the book (31).

Despite these problems R. Gregor Smith in his Preface to the second edition of his translation of Ich und Du,

tried to express an awareness of a kind of revolutionary simplicity. The inadequacy of a translation to do more than hint at the power of the original is specially noticeable with a poetical work of this kind (32).

Smith was closely in touch with Buber throughout his work on the first and second revised edition (1958) of his translation and it can be supposed that it is significant that there are very few alterations in the latter. For his Analytical Interpretation of Martin Buber's I and Thou, (33) Kohanski uses and translates the German text indicated above but provides parallel references to both Kaufmann and Smith.

I wish to consider more closely the problems implied by the difficulties of understanding Buber's use of language. In doing so, I am concerned with the way in which some of Buber's terms are translated into English rather than directly with his use of German. Kaufmann considers that Buber's use of language is antipathetic to the common sense of the English-speaking world, that the text of I and Thou is full of solecisms, and other oddities, and that the obscure and difficult way in which he wrote made Buber was a legend in his lifetime. Despite this Buber's central ideas are not dependent on his personalised use of language (34).

The range of associated meanings in English attached to alternative translations will serve to point towards some of the

central ideas with which I and Thou is concerned and enable a later discussion of the extent to which those ideas are Jewish. I do not intend at this stage to draw conclusions but to establish the basis of that discussion. By way of illustration I shall note some of those terms and how Kaufmann translates them:

- a) Umkehr: translated as "return."
- b) Begegnung: translated as "encounter."
- c) Verwirklichen: the verb, translated as (to) "actualise."
- d) wirklich: the adjective, translated as "actual," "true," or "genuine."
- e) Verwirklichung: the noun, translated as "actualisation."

Smith, on the other hand, translates, Umkehr, as "turning," which is certainly an improvement on "the rather obscure 'reversal'" of the first edition of his translation. Umkehr, is Buber's German rendering of the Hebrew noun, t'shuvah and Friedman considers that Kaufmann's "return" loses the real dynamic of a central concept of the biblical prophets. But Kaufmann in fact was very much aware that Umkehr is not only a central concept of Hebrew prophecy but central also to Buber's "I and Thou," and that "what is meant is the return to God" (35). He makes the point that it is the Bible's use of the verbal form which carries the active connotations which are so important for Buber and cites, of many possible examples, Deuteronomy 4:30, Isaiah 10:21, and Jeremiah 4:1. (36) It is the "dynamic" aspect of the word with which Kaufmann is particularly concerned. He considers that in the Hebrew tradition the stress is on the act of return which concept as deeds lies at the centre of Jewish religion (37).

It must remain a matter of choice as to which translation of Umkehr is preferred. However it must be considered that the notion of "returning" suits the case of a people for whom the idea of land is important, and that the meaning of "turning" might better suit the individual who expresses, for example on Yom Kippur, in a more

liturgical sense the movement of both heart and will towards God. Both the collective and individual aspect of the word is of concern to Buber.

The translation of Begegnung by the English words, "meeting" and "encounter" (Smith and Kaufmann respectively) presents another difficulty. Friedman states that, "Buber and I always strongly preferred 'meeting'" (38). The notion of "encounter", does contain something less than the total mutuality Buber sees as the ideal result of true meeting whether it be between man and man, or man and God. Indeed the word suggests the possibility, if not of conflict, then of some element of difference. It also contains a further possibility, that of surprise. Later I will discuss the idea that in the Bible man's approach to God, and God's approach to man seems not to contain the level of mutuality Buber would hope for and that the associations of the word "encounter" might well suit to describe the character of these meetings. Alternatively, translating Begegnung as "meeting" with all the potential for mutuality Buber would wish to have realised, might suit the case of the coming-together of individuals. In fact the notion of confrontation or of being "over against" suggested by the word "encounter", Kaufmann confines to his translation of gegenüber, as "confront", thus relieving "encounter" of this load.

Kaufmann similarly seems to want to protect the value of Buber's occasional use of Realität by confining "reality" to his translation of this word. This creates other problems. It leaves him with the need to find an alternative translation for wirklich and for its verbal and noun forms, verwirklichen and verwirklichung respectively. He chooses to translate these terms as "actual", "(to) actualise," and "actualisation," while Smith chooses the more comfortable, "real", "to realise", and "realisation." Kaufmann's interesting point is that while he concedes the smoother rendering of Smith, wirklich is clearly associated by Buber, (and by Nietzsche and

Goethe) with wirken, and werk, "work" and with wirkung, effect, and wirksam, "effective" (39). The point being that in both man to man relationships and in the God to man relationship, Buber wishes to show the active potential of man's will to be effective, that is, man's involvement is, (can be) causal, in everything from realising a true dialogical relationship with his fellow man, to an active participation with God, in creation.

The problem of both Buber's meaning and how to render it into English is well illustrated in an early passage from I and Thou which introduces the theme of art and of creativity, of the origins of art and of man's response to being confronted (gegenübergetreten) by a form which "wants to become a work through him" (40). Towards the end of this short section the sentence occurs:

Und wirkliche Beziehung ist es, darin ich zu ihr stehe: sie wirkt an mir, wie ich an ihr wirke (41).

Smith translates,

And the relation in which I stand to it is real, for it affects me, as I affect it (42).

and Kaufmann,

And it is an actual relation: it acts on me as I act on it (43).

In this example Kaufmann's rendering seems stronger and preserves the dynamic aspect of man's right decision which is so important to Buber. It also avoids the difficult problem which Smith allows, namely in what meaningful way can one talk of a relationship as being real, to a form which as yet remains unrealised. In a sense, of course, the character of man's relationship with the inanimate, with "forms", with nature itself, runs throughout Buber's thinking and I shall have need to take up this aspect of the discussion later.

The difference in Kaufmann's and Smith's conception of Buber's meaning is set on edge by the example that Friedman (44) cites as the central sentence of Buber's book, "Alles wirkliche Leben ist

Begegnung" (45). Smith has this as, "All real living is meeting," (46) while Kaufmann offers, "All actual life is encounter" (47).

I do not intend to dwell on Kaufmann's rendering of Du as "You," rather than, "Thou," since this probably would deflect the discussion towards the limitation of modern English to cope with the distinctions implied. In any case the matter is almost entirely a question of the attitude the user brings to the pronoun and its possible alternatives, which is to say the reader will bring preconceived associations to the words. Thus, for many,

Thou immediately brings to mind God: Du does not. And the God of whom it makes us think is not the God to whom one might cry out in gratitude, despair, or agony, not the God to whom one complains or prays spontaneously: it is the God of the pulpits, the God of the holy tone (48).

Yet since Buber's primary word-pairs express man's basic attitudes (49), it is with attitudes that I must later be concerned. Friedman concedes that,

Kaufmann has done a real service in trying to correct the tendency to regard the "I-Thou relationship" as exclusively or mainly between man and God and restoring the primordially Jewish recognition (and that of Jesus) that the love of God cannot be separated from the love of one's neighbour (50).

There are numerous other words central to Buber's thought which could be considered in terms of the difficulty of translating them into English. It is intended, as part of this Introduction, only to illustrate the problem and these other words together with the themes indicated above will be taken up later in a discussion of the subject-matters they serve.

Lastly, although I have already discussed Buber's existentialism in the Introduction, it is necessary to consider its specific implications for the basic attitudes represented by "I-Thou/I-It," and also to ask in what way Buber's existentialism relates to and reflects genuine Jewish attitude. Pfuetze interestingly suggests that existentialism actually goes back as far as the "terms and tones," of the Hebrew prophets (51). Diamond considers that "I and Thou," is

markedly existentialist since its approach to meaning is that of "passionate engagement" which interacts with the Judaism's world-affirming traditions (52).

It is this world-affirming character that distinguishes Buber's existentialism from the anxiety-ridden attitudes of, say, Kierkegaard, and the anti-theistic and more negative attitudes of French existentialism. Some Buber commentators, Friedman among them, try to confine Buber's existentialism to his earlier writings, using phrases like, "dialogical thinking," or "dialogical philosophy" to describe his more mature work (53). For Diamond, Buber's later work, (in which he includes I and Thou), is a more "felicitous" expression of existentialism since it is enriched by his understanding of Jewish tradition (54).

What might this fusion of an existential perspective with an enriched insight into Jewish tradition mean for Buber's Jewish self-awareness? Jewish tradition, of course, allows for the kind of subjective truth with which existentialism is associated, yet Judaism has always made available objective safe-guards to ensure that the content of subjective truth does remain within that same Jewish tradition. Indeed in Judaism, "the existential emphasis on the individual and the personal is important, but it is not enough" (55).

Berkovits continues by pointing out the necessary but hard fact, that it is possible to be sincerely committed to something that may be very wrong. In the strictest sense, the existential emphasis on the individual alone cannot be sustained, since in Buber's philosophy as well as within the Jewish tradition, "living one's own life authentically demands that the existential commitment issue into action" (56).

It follows that once actions are involved, the individual moves out into all the ramifications of relationship. This is precisely Buber's point and precisely what is implied by the attitudes and



relationships signified by his primary word-pairs. It is also in one important sense descriptive of a characteristic Jewish tension, namely that of faith and law. Biblical history and religion are full of examples of this seeming conflict and what Buber attempts in his work (and doubtless within himself) can in one sense be seen as an attempt to resolve it and to give it some kind of unity.

### iii) The Primary Word I-Thou.

The opening sentences of I and Thou establish that Buber's combined words are expressive of the attitudes through which man approaches the world (57). I want to examine these attitudes and to argue that they are fundamentally Jewish in nature.

I-Thou represents the interpersonal element in the meeting between man and man, but the matter is complicated because Buber would not wish to limit this to human relationships but includes God and objects of nature. It is in this category that the individual can hope to enjoy true mutuality. "I-It" represents the attitude man might have to anything he merely experiences and uses, the posture towards the world remains entirely subjective, it does not require movement into the "between" and thus lacks the hall-mark of mutuality. The attitude "I-It" may refer to other people, animals, and even God. If man confines himself simply to the attitude of "experiencing", he will remain within the terms of reference of "I-It," wherein the content of the external world is only "object," and as such this experienced world remains completely passive (58).

In this section I intend to concentrate on the meaning of the "I-Thou" locution for interpersonal relationships, leaving until the next section a discussion of the attitude represented by "I-It". The implications of the "Thou" addressed in the "I-Thou" attitude being God or the "Eternal Thou" I will consider in the following chapter.

The primary words signifying the two alternative attitudes create

a constant tension within which man must live. It is a tension caused by risk, by the kind of "holy insecurity" with which Buber was concerned in Daniel, where he coined the image of the "narrow ridge" along which man must make his way. The risk concerns the ever present possibility that the "Thou" can become an "It," indeed Buber sees this as inevitable since it, "is the exalted melancholy of our fate that every Thou in our world must become an It" (59). But the converse is also true; that is, the potential exists all the time for the "It" to become a "Thou," for "the It is the eternal chrysalis, the Thou the eternal butterfly" (60).

It is seen, therefore, that the attitudes are in themselves a potency, they can transmute the world man inhabits so that a man might enjoy mutuality with another person or with God, or with God by means of another person; he might enjoy a meeting with the Thou of a natural "thing" or animal, or might alternatively miss all of these potentials, seeing people as objects, as things in nature to be experienced along with all other things.

"All real living is meeting," says Buber (61). This affirmation and the attitude represented by the "I-Thou" of human relationship in broad sense accords with Jewish tradition concerning the absolute centrality of man in God's scheme. It is from the Biblical anthropomorphism of man being made in the image of God that the highest of standards derive (62). I shall return to a full discussion of this later in the chapter. It is axiomatic that within Judaism faith in God is ideally expressed in rightness of attitude and action towards one's fellow-man.

Hebrew man, moreover, has both free will and the responsibility which must go with it, and in his capacity to choose he holds a potential both for good and evil. Man's superior status is the "axis" of the universe around which revolves his responsibility and duty towards both God and the created world (63). Thus Buber's emphasis on

the attitude implied in the word-pair I-Thou is consistent with a traditional Jewish view which places an emphasis on the ethical edge of man's responsibility to his fellow man and on the implications of true meeting with him. The rabbinic view of man teaches that he has within him two inclinations, the yetzer tov (an inclination to good) and the yetzer ha-ra, (an inclination to evil). The yetzer tov might be related to Buber's positive attitude both to I-Thou and I-It relationships, the yetzer ha-ra to that attitude which robs all encounter of the potential for a relationship with the Thou. It is in this context that Unterman quotes the Talmud (64) as saying that, "no man sins unless a spirit of foolishness enters him" (65).

Buber would say that it is precisely here in the many moments of each day where man must make a choice between these inclinations, (or to use Buber's own terminology, attitudes,) that the individual exercises that t'shuvah, or turning which is critical both to the moment and in more absolute terms. Buber's emphasis on this practice of t'shuvah in the context of the mundane circumstances of every day life, reflect the abiding influence on him of the Hasidic notion of all of life being potentially sacramental. Man lives continuously with the responsibility for "turning" each moment towards God.

This position of Buber's is consistent with a continuous tradition in Judaism, but two problems emerge which are fundamental to an understanding of Buber's Jewish self-definition. The one concerns the fact that Buber was not an observer of Halakha, the other which is inextricably associated with it, is that the attitudes represented by the word-pair "I-Thou" are entirely subjective. I want to consider this latter point first.

Subjectivism in religion has always been something against which Jewish tradition warns and as indicated above, something against which it guards. Buber aims at some kind of pure relationship, (indeed as I will show, at some kind of pure faith) refined by being cleared of any

form of mediation. He calls for the I to meet the Thou, (the essence) of the other in a direct and immediate way (66). The question has to be asked as to how one knows that the Thou encountered is authentic? Certainly there can be no doubt that Buber would require it to be authentic, but how can this be assured without objective criteria? Since engagement itself seems to be the ground of meeting, might not even Buber himself be wholly absorbed in a "Thou" that is delusory and not authentic at all? There are, he tells us, no guarantees of truth, this is the risk, the "holy insecurity" of man's position; it is made holy, precisely by the attitude which turns the moment of decision towards God. Whatever the individual takes to be truth has to be manifest in the reality of one's own life; the "self" is the only vehicle for its communication and it alone is answerable for the success or failure of that responsibility. Since truth can never be guaranteed except the self in this way, there is a sense of "insecurity" and since this risk is taken in partnership with God, it is "holy" (67). The insecurity contingent on risk does not then insure the truth for us, but it does lead us to where truth is to be "felt" (68).

I want to consider also that more relative and perhaps more rational aspect of truth that touches interpersonal relations, namely the idea that, "the primary word I-Thou can only be spoken with the whole being" (69). What could this mean? It suggests that one relates totally to the other by being unconditionally open to him and for the realisation of mutuality the other would have to be open in the same way. No one, not even Buber, would suggest that we can realise, let alone sustain in our daily lives, this kind of intensity of relationship. Cox has suggested that for many of the relationships the term "I-You" would be more appropriate than "I-Thou," (but not for the reason of an alternative translation of the German Du, touched on above.) "I-You" suggests that one relates in such a way as to respect

"the personality and humanity of the other," without loading the relationship with the kind of intimate intensity that I-Thou suggests. (70). Buber admitted that our interpersonal relationships may not always be entirely reciprocal, and may be

limited by our insufficiency, and also placed under limitation by the inner laws of our life together. There are some I-Thou relationships which in their nature may not unfold to full mutuality if they are to persist in that nature (71).

The condition of true mutuality may not always be realised, as for example between a "genuine educator" and his pupil, or in a more specialised way between the psychotherapist and his patient (72). Yet, even if the other is not aware of it relation can exist (73). Buber argues that the mark of an authentic "I-Thou" relationship lies in its quality, in the experience of mutuality, in the sense of the wholeness of the "other" over-against oneself, without requiring the other to change or to conform in any way. It is both a complete and a free association. Here the word "dialogue" becomes crucial. To say that a relationship is dialogical is to insist on its character of mutuality. But Buber does not press this into some form of absolute union and certainly there is no mystical implication. As Macquarrie reasons, the tension between relation and distance will remain:

for a true relation preserves the other in his otherness, in his uniqueness the dialogical relation does not permit one side to be merged in the other. Buber is particularly interested that we have respect for the other and not try to change him in accordance with our idea of what he ought to be (74).

Buber's ideal of relationship confirms attitudes embedded in the Jewish tradition. But if it is the quality of the relationship, or more specifically the degree of mutuality that provides the authenticating principle, the question yet remains: who is to be the judge of this outside of the I and the Thou concerned? If there is no objective standard the relationship remains self-authenticating. Might it be supposed that the quality of the relationship would itself be life-enhancing to the point where the life lived becomes witness to

its own authenticity? Again the way in which a man lives his life would be for Buber a sign of the attitudes out of which he lives it. This would be true also of the Jew who lives his life in observation of mitzvot.

Of course what Buber does is to separate himself from precisely those criteria by which Judaism judges the genuineness of encounter, namely from the Law and from mitzvot. In so doing he places himself outside the body of Jewish tradition, but in the context of interpersonal relationship as in other contexts I will discuss, he is still, I submit, in a vital way attached to that body. Is it possible that an Halakhic attitude may reside in one who does not observe the mitzvot, or that the spirit and sentiment of covenantal religion lives within one who cannot accept that Law could ever be the content of revelation? And is it possible that truth in Biblical terms may be fully embraced by one who denies the usefulness of principles of verification?

Soloveitchik tells us that,

the fundamental tendency of the Halakha is to translate the qualitative features of religious subjectivity into firm and well-established quantities 'like nails well fastened' (Eccles. 12:11) that no storm can uproot from their place (75).

Appel tells us that those commandments formulated by Halakha are the "divine blueprint for the ideal life," and that the basis of covenant is the both the oral and written revealed law. He points out that the observation of mitzvot directed towards the attainment of holiness, kedushah, concretise the "ethical ideas of justice and righteousness" and,

embody the decisive expression of Judaism on the level of religious commitment and human endeavour. Viewed nomistically within their halakhic frame the mitzvot are the key to a true conception of Judaism, both as regards its religious tenets and its ethical norms. An authentic philosophy of Judaism must be grounded in the mitzvot and in Jewish Law (76).

This of course, was well known to Buber and also well known are

the arguments he gave concerning Law and Revelation for his not being able to accept the observation of mizvot as an essential part of what it means to be Jewish (77). But this seeming impasse is by no means the end of the discussion and I wish to return to the question of the quality of a man's life being the authenticating principle of the rightness of his relationship both with God and his fellow-man. Appel makes the point that an essential feature in the Hinnuk's rationale of mizvot is that,

the deepest impressions upon a man's soul are made not by thoughts alone but by overt acts: "You must know that man is affected by his actions. His heart and all of his thoughts invariably follow the deeds with which he is occupied, whether they be good or bad man's men's hearts are drawn after their actions (78).

That men's hearts and thoughts follow the deed suggests that a man's character is moulded by the habit of performing certain acts and following a specific code of conduct. Maimonides make this clear,

Let him practice again and again the actions prompted by those dispositions and repeat them continually till they become easy and are no longer irksome to him, and so the corresponding dispositions will become a fixed part of his character (79).

Buber would agree that the practice of virtue exercised in right choices in the numerous opportunities for choice thrown up in the daily life of the individual might condition man towards the good. In the act of choosing the individual demonstrates the "inclination" or attitude governing his life and presumably the quality of the life lived is objective evidence of that attitude and the interpersonal relationships arising out of it.

For a Jew to stand within a Jewish continuum, is it necessary to observe all of the mizvot? If not, what is the essential minimum and the criteria of selection? There is a strong tradition in Judaism which asserts that the lowest common denominator is at the same time the criterion by which the indispensable mizvot might be selected. It revolves around the biblical command, "Love your fellow as yourself" (30). Appel reminds us that this is the foundation of Jewish morality,

and as Akiba said it "is the fundamental principle of the Torah" (81). More than this, we are assured that if a man were to live his life out of this one principle, it would be a "concrete expression", that is, an objective expression, of this mizvah and that he could expect absolute reciprocation, if not mutuality, "for as he does unto his fellowman, so will his fellowmen do unto him" (82). Appel further explains that all the specific obligations of this mizvah expressive of mutual respect, responsibility and obligation, all the,

personal acts of lovingkindness which are without a prescribed limit are included in the commandment, 'Love your fellow as yourself' (83).

What is meant, here, by "yourself"? Appel's answer points to the notion that this concerns a,

singular nuance in the relationship, a deeper, more personal relationship characterised as ahavat nefesh, 'a love of the soul'. This would express itself in 'love, friendship and peace, and rejoicing in his fellowman's good fortune' (84).

I must add to this the discussion in the previous chapter of the term Re'ha, as referring to the subject of our love "being the one nearby". This is a self-perception close to that contained in the "I" as Buber understands it. This is not very far removed from Buber's criterion of mutuality. Mizvah 243, it would seem, is concerned with love but not love which is merely a feeling or emotion. It speaks of love which manifests itself in deed. Buber speaks of love in a similar way.

Feelings accompany the metaphysical and metapsychical fact of love, but they do not constitute it. Feelings dwell in man; but man dwells in his love. That is no metaphor, but the actual truth. Love does not cling to the I in such a way as to have the Thou only for its 'content,' its object; but love is between I and Thou (85).

Buber seems to share with the mizvah precisely that sense of commitment, that movement of the will as well as of the heart which characterises a Jewish understanding of love. He affirms: "Love, is responsibility of an I for a Thou" (86). If such things are acceptable evidence of yetzer tov, (right inclination or attitude



towards ones fellowman,) then might they not also be acceptable as criteria for the kind of relationship Buber's "I-Thou" attitude implies, and might not that attitude thus be deeply Jewish in form?

There is one further subject I wish to discuss in the context of interpersonal relationships and the attitude represented by the word-pair, "I-Thou." It is the possibility, already referred to, that the locution imposes its own limitation in that it seems difficult to move from the encounter of individual with individual to the encounter of the individual with a group or community. There seems not to be in Buber's system an "I-You," where "You" might represent the plural form. As Berkovits puts it, "there is no way from I-Thou to We or to We-Thou," and leaves us without a bridge between individual mutuality and community or society, thus,

the singularity of the I-Thou relation may serve as a basis for the personal religion of the individual soul; it cannot account for Judaism and the concept inseparable from it, that of the holy people (87).

If this is true it poses for Judaism a difficult and central problem. A consideration of community that allows the possibility of an application of the "I-Thou" attitude to a plural situation, is more properly considered in the next section. Here I want only to suggest that a closer examination of Buber's "I-Thou" attitude does in fact make an important contribution to the notion of communities of all kinds. I further want to show that as with the "I-Thou" attitude to individual relationships, Buber's concept of society and the ideal he holds for community are also embedded in Jewish teaching and tradition. But might not the same criteria of Mitzvah 243 and Buber's "love is responsibility of an I for a Thou," be applied also to an addition of relationships? The question is given some moment when it is remembered that community begins with marriage and the family. Buber would offer the marital relationship as the ideal relationship and the family as a paradigm, a microcosm of society. In his survey of

Buber's I and Thou, Friedman considers love and marriage, politics and community, within a single chapter (88), which in itself expresses the relationship and connection these ideas have in Buber's thinking. In one sense it can be argued that Buber's dialogical philosophy grew out of his sense of and commitment to the notion of community, a notion built on the foundation of individual relationships. Friedman suggests that Buber's philosophy did not emerge from his "individual being" but from the "between" which he knew from his marriage (89). In understanding marriage and the family as the basic and ideal unit of society, Buber's "I-Thou" attitude seems at least to be in accord with the attitude of those mizvot which concern the obligation of marriage and the procreation of children (90).

From the institution of marriage Buber moves to institutions of a more public nature and he is concerned to show that society's forms, the "mechanical State" does not necessarily "yield public life." Nor will these communities be given life by an injection of "feelings." In this respect Buber wants to show the inadequacy of feelings as much in community life as in individual life. Right feelings, even right intentions, will not suddenly replace the dry and dead forms of human association "by the community of love."

The true community does not arise through peoples having feelings for one another (though not indeed without it), but through, first, their taking their stand in living mutual relation with a living Centre, and, second, their being in living mutual relation with one another (91).

The question must be put as to whether the idealism of Buber's interpersonal relationships is something that can actually be applied and practised. This is a discussion I will take up in Chapter 8, but it might seem that even as in the realistic world of politics Buber had to withdraw from the bargaining process of decision making because of his unwillingness to compromise a principle, so must his followers pull back from this ideal of sustained mutuality to a more relative and tenable position.

However this may be for the individual concerned, Buber remains clear that the religious man cannot withdraw from the world but he warns that we must all the time make a distinction between community which is merely an addition of human units, and the community built of relation (92). He is suggesting that, just as the nature of a man's relationship with God will show itself in the quality of the individual's life, so will that individual life in right relationship with others manifest itself in true community. And here also, the basic question, "can it work?" must be asked and the same response made to the greater realism of an absolute ideal relatively held.

We can compare Buber's social principles in I and Thou with those of Halakha. For example Buber writes:

True public and true personal life are two forms of connexion. In that they come into being and endure, feelings, (the changing content) and institutions (the constant form) are necessary; but put together they do not create human life: this is done by the third, the central presence of the Thou, or rather, more truly stated, by the central Thou that has been received in the present (93).

And Appel:

The ethical norms that govern the conduct of society, as of the individual, are hypostatized within the Halakha in a regimen of specific laws and mizvot. The latter are themselves grounded in certain principles which reflect moral and religious, as well as sociological, objectives (94).

Buber's sustained and committed concern for the Jewish community as such and for society in a broader sense is apparent and would seem to be in accord with the fundamental principle of the Torah, namely ishub ha-'olam, the welfare of society, that is with "the betterment of the human condition in society" (95). It would seem therefore that in the context of Buber's notion of community, the limitation resides in the language in which the locution "I-Thou" is expressed rather than in the attitude it represents.

### iii) The Primary Word I-It.

The essential difference between Buber's two basic attitudes is that if "I-Thou" concerns the interpersonal, "I-it" concerns the person-object relation; it is the attitude by which man experiences and uses the world. For this reason, "the primary word I-Thou can be spoken only with the whole being" (96), whereas the locution "I-It" can never be spoken with the whole being. Furthermore, "the world of It is set in the context of time and space, the world of Thou is not set in the context of either of these" (97). But it must be kept in mind that the possibility of passing between these attitudes in both directions is always present, that

the particular Thou, after the relational event has run its course, is bound to become an It. The particular It, by entering the relational event, may become a Thou (98).

If the ground for the "I-Thou" attitude is engagement, then the ground for the "I-It" attitude is detachment. It is an attitude adopted by the investigators of the worlds of science and technology, involving the processes of analysis, organisation and categorisation of knowledge by which means man learns about and controls the world. While this attitude can be limited to the point where Buber says that "he who lives with It alone is not a man," he accepts that "without It man cannot live" (99).

Here objectivity is necessary; it is the way Man acquires knowledge of the world. But there is, inherent in the attitude, the danger of people becoming merely an object of study and as such simply a source of information. But on behalf of art, Buber draws a fine distinction between mere production and creativity:

This is the eternal source of art: a man is faced by a form which desires to be made through him into a work. To produce is to draw forth, to invent is to find, to shape is to discover. I lead the form across - into the world of It. The work produced is a thing among things, able to be experienced and described as a sum of qualities (100).

While Buber's "I-Thou" attitude is the one to which the

fundamental and absolute meanings of existence are attached. Buber makes clear that the "I-It" attitude is by no means negative and does not represent the dark side of human nature. It is an attitude that remains indispensable to the way in which man approaches many aspects of his world. As indicated above, it is an attitude without which man cannot live. But as I will discuss below, the "I-It" attitude, almost by definition, allows the risk of those choices which man has to make each day and which can issue in either a good or an evil consequence.

I do not want to examine specific aspects of the sphere of It, such as social institutions, or the scientific or aesthetic responses of man to his environment. Rather I intend in this section to be concerned with the wider and perennial issues of a) freedom and causality, and of b) good and evil, the potential energies for which appear to derive from Buber's "I-It" attitude. I will be concerned to show how this discussion illuminates Buber's Judaism.

#### a) Freedom and Causality.

Buber would assert that man is free and it is the exercising of his freedom in the choices confronting him that steers him between the two basic attitudes he adopts. The consequences of choice are critical and I will consider them below. Here, I am interested to examine the implications of man being capable of free choice. If he is confined to the world of It causality would "weigh heavily on man" (101) but since he is free to choose he can leave the world of It for the "world of relation" (102). Indeed, Buber explains that:

I and Thou freely confront one another in mutual effect that is neither connected with nor coloured by causality. Here man is assured of freedom both of his being and of Being - he who decides is free (103).

Diamond considers that in Buber's thought man is thus, "summoned to free and responsible decision which is the stuff of existence and the focus of existentialism" (104). It is Buber's understanding of man's freedom which casts light on the way he lives (or should live)

his daily life. Man does not exercise his freedom as though detached from the world around him, his will does not lead him to an arbitrary act, or to a series of arbitrary acts. Only the truly freeman is able to respond to the unprecedented and face creatively each new situation. And it is here, possibly, that we can find one clue to Buber's rejection of the observation of mizvot as a binding source of direction. It lies in the difference between the precededent and the unprecedented. Buber inhabits a rarefied world where each situation presents itself as new and untried; there are no laws which man can apply to situations of this kind; man is alone and it would seem that he has no alternative but to stand outside tradition. It is in these pristine moments that man confronts not simply a choice of attitudes, but his destiny.

He who naked approaches the Face, is a free man, and destiny confronts him as the counterpart of his freedom. It is not his boundary, but his fulfilment; freedom and destiny are linked together in meaning (105).

Buber endows each moment of life with a weight of responsibility that would crush most of us; there is no relief for man, no getting away from the awfulness of the moment in which, "he has only the one thing, his repeated decision to approach his destiny (106). It is important, however, to make a distinction between destiny and fate. If in each moment man's choice is truly a "turning," a t'shuvah man will be concerned with destiny rather than with fate; the former has positive connotations of an open purpose to be realised, the latter of an end which is closed and predetermined. It is belief in fate that inhibits the act of turning, whereas the free man believes that he turns to destiny as to something that needs him (107). It is worth pausing here to consider how close to Jewish tradition are Buber's thoughts on the nature of man's freedom?

From biblical times to the present day, Judaism has made its contribution to philosophy's preoccupation with the basic notions of man's freedom, of free will and causality. Jewish philosophy has

always been at the service of theology and the subject of freedom has been considered in the context of revelation, specifically that of Law as the revealed will of God. That man is free is axiomatic to Jewish faith. But this freedom is qualified by some thinkers as man being free to act within the terms of reference of natural law. For example, in the early fourteenth century, Abner of Burgos (who converted to Christianity and whose thought was influenced by Islamic Aristotelianism) taught that all man's actions are subject to laws of causality; that is our will can choose between alternatives, but the choice itself is determined by necessary laws (108). Hasdai Crescas, later in the same century, narrows the field of freedom even more than Abner; he maintained that in the choice between alternatives causality acting on the will determines which of the course will be adopted. Guttman suggests that this is "a complete capitulation to determinism" (109). But such determinist theories by no means have it all their own way.

In terms of the Jewish understanding of revealed Law, acceptance and observation of the Law, of mizvot, is not seen as submission to the will of God in terms of predestination but as free and willing acknowledgement of covenantal obligation. Guttman writes,

that belief in the freedom of the human will, which in the Bible is an immediate religious certainty, becomes a doctrinal proposition in the Talmud ... The difficulty of reconciling man's freedom with God's omniscience was fully realised, but was not resolved. Instead the rabbis held fast to both horns of the dilemma: 'Everything is foreseen, yet the verdict is according to one's deeds (110).

It might seem that the rabbis are simply hedging their bets, but in fact it is part of the Jewish method of enquiry that seemingly opposite poles can be held together, indeed, that truth is concerned with holding such polarities in balance. This is particularly important when it is remembered that Judaism is less concerned with definitive intellectual statements, than with discovering the right way to live. It would seem that in Biblical and Talmudic Judaism

rightness of attitude is critical if man is to live successfully; God's omniscience and man's free will find just that point of balance in correctness of attitude. The "imitation" of God, a subject I will discuss in the next section, is the reason behind man's free acceptance of the Law. Guttman again:

piety is not so much the mere observance of divine commandments as the imitation of a divine model. Love of God and faithful trust in him are considered the foundation of the right observance of the commandments. Consequently, much stress is laid on moral freedom: man's actions are his own, even in relation to the divine omnipotence (111).

Altmann quotes Saadiah Gaon in support of the view long held by Jewish tradition that, there can be nothing illusory about human freedom since, "the ability to act must precede the act itself," and that a consequence of man's free choice must be his acceptance of responsibility for it (112). Even though he acts out of the right attitude, man cannot be held responsible for his acts if his freedom is anything less than real. Altmann calls on Maimonides to lend weight to this assertion, "where it is in our power to act it is also in our power not to act, and vice versa" (113), which clearly underlines Buber's own emphasis on the critical importance of man's choices and their consequences.

While in broad terms it can be seen that Buber's emphasis on man's freedom to choose and on the importance of that choice is consistent with Jewish tradition, a closer examination exposes problems. Traditionally, man derives his freedom as a gift from God, as something built into his nature; this idea requires the corollary notion that God's omniscience is self-limiting. Buber recognises the paradox of the necessary co-existence of God's absolute knowledge and man's freedom. He rejects Kant's solution which assigns necessity to the world of appearance and freedom to the world of being; instead necessity and freedom cease to be a matter of the intellect, of "worlds of thought" but become part of his reality of standing before



God;

then I cannot try to escape the paradox that has to be lived by assigning the irreconcilable propositions to two separate realms of validity; nor can I be helped to an ideal reconciliation by any theological device: but I am compelled to take both to myself, to be lived together, and in being lived they are one (114).

It is in the use of that last phrase, "in being lived they are one," that Buber carries the implications of dialogical relationship further than Jewish tradition might want to go. Berkovits considers that the source of Buber's confidence and optimism is pantheistic metaphysics in which "Being and Meaning are identical" (115). Buber calls for an ontic participation in all things. I think that Berkovits' charge of pantheism should be mitigated and that Buber's point of view is better described as panentheistic. The significance of this important distinction is that it makes existence potentially holy, and the potential exists, in Hasidic terms, to be realised by the hallowing of every day (116).

Even so Berkovits' concern has point, because the degree of actuality Buber describes rests on neither of these alternatives but on dialogical freedom. I have already shown above, that the degree of actuality experienced differs according to the nature of the "Thou" concerned and that in fact the same "Thou" is not encountered in all dialogical situations. Nevertheless it remains possible for man to discover that in making his free choice, what he really wants is identical with what God wants for him; it is possible that man's attitude, whether "I-Thou" or "I-It", (assuming the "I's" of each are authentic ie. "real",) might lead him to do the will of God in any given situation for if the attitude is "right," in that moment Law and Being are in harmony, they are in full accord. There is no need in fact to take the further step which troubles Berkovits, and say that as Meaning and Being are one, so are also Law and Being" (117).

I want to consider the possible relationship between Law and Being on the assumption that they are quite separate. Both the observer of

Law and Buber's "I" responding in a full and open way to the potential of meeting, seem to be concerned with necessity and both believe that the response made is a free act. It is difficult to see how, from the point of view of Jewish Law, man can stand in freedom before the Commandments: "Thou shalt," would seem to be unequivocal. That man should need such a comprehensive structure of laws, or perhaps it would be clearer to say, that as such a comprehensive system of laws exists, suggests something about man's nature: that man is weak, that in his natural state he is, as it were, immature, childlike, requiring specific guidance because he is incapable of finding his own way to the good. The existence of such laws suggest that while man has been given the yetzer tov, (the inclination to good) left without law, man would be directionless; the law as given and revealed, is objective. It is man's magnetic north against which he is able to measure both his present position as he stands before God and also the direction of his life. Buber's understanding of man's freedom suggests that this direction-finding mechanism is innate, that man has in fact a sense of good which while it is by no means unerring, is a sure guide provided he adopts the right attitude to each situation; that is, if the "I", meets the "Thou" of whatever and whoever is encountered, right living will follow. The absolute ethical demands of Law might seem to qualify man's freedom, but the fullness of his responsibility remains. While for Buber there are ethical demands which would be absolute, for the greater part they are relative, but they are also practised out of absolute freedom in acceptance of absolute responsibility. The Law says to the Jew, "Thou shalt"; the demand of the situation says to Buber, "only he who knows relation and knows about the presence of the Thou is capable of decision" (118). Yet it would seem, that in terms of attitude (as opposed to dogma) these two positions might meet in Buber's epigram, "he who decides is free."

In effect, it is possible to focus this discussion of the nature

of man's freedom by considering that of the two points of view, Jewish tradition works within a framework of a Law which also is a model; yet more, it is both a Divine model and a construct of an ideal world against which man may measure his existent world and see how best he might live in it. The other, Buber's point of view, lacks both framework and model, save that which Buber himself considers as such. He lacks what Soloveitchik poetically calls, "the shining light of objective knowledge" (119). Thus we meet again the problem of subjectivity, and as I have asked in a different context in this section, if there are no objective guide-lines by which man might measure his life, against what does he measure the reality of his freedom? Order, control, even discipline would seem to be the ground out of which freedom can best flourish. If all restraint, all standards are carried within and are in fact subjective, the concept of freedom becomes something which man merely concedes to himself, rather than something received from God as an awful and privileged gift.

With what then does man approach reality? Buber argues that man can approach reality out of a religious situation that offers nothing but the consciousness of the presence of God.

Man's religious situation, his being there in the Presence, is characterised by its essential and indissoluble antinomy. The significance of the situation is that it is lived, and nothing but lived, continually, ever anew, without foresight, without forethought, without prescription, in the totality of its antinomy (120).

Certainly for Soloveitchik, Buber in this context would be an example of the universal homo religiosus through whom surges a, subjective current, which from time to time, in its raging turbulence sweeps away his entire being to obscure and inchoate realms" (121). In contrast, Soloveitchik's Halakhic man, stands before reality out of religious situation which includes both God and the Halakha, the latter serving as a "dam" against all subjective currents. This dam,

is his Torah by which means he orientates himself to the world. The essence of Halakha, as received from God, "consists in creating an ideal world and cognizing the relationship between that ideal world and our concrete environment" (122).

It is not part of my purpose to attempt to reconcile such opposite positions. Buber has "chosen" to stand before reality without the objective guidance of Law and in so doing he ceased to be an observer of mizvot. By so doing he confines the Law to the world of "I-It", yet he remains consistent to Jewish tradition insofar that while exercising his choice in freedom he accepts responsibility for the consequences of that choice.

Before moving to the next subject, there is one further matter I wish to consider. In Buber's thought about the nature of man's freedom he makes a distinction between the truly free "I" and the individuality of the self-willed man. This difference is associated with the possibility of man moving between the two basic attitudes, since the truly free "I" of either attitude is in no way subject to the whims and inconsistencies of the merely self-willed man.

The free man is he who wills without arbitrary self-will. He must sacrifice his puny, unfree will, that is controlled by things and instincts, to his grand will, which quits defined for destined being (123).

There is an active and passive aspect to the free man's use of his will and we find Buber's interest in mysticism surviving here in the way he expresses the passive aspect: it echoes Taoist "non-action", and neither intervenes nor is merely acquiescent; he is simply involved in his "repeated decision to approach his destiny" (124). The active aspect of man's will owes much to kavena, the consecrated action of the Hasid. What is meant by Kavena is not something quite as strong as will, but something akin to a combination of intention and direction. It is, "the mystery of a soul directed to a goal. Kavena does not mean purpose but goal" (125). It would seem that Kavanot, unconscious intention, might be nearer to Buber's concept of the active

nature of man's will, but it is of Kavarna that he writes (126), and Friedman seems to consider this to be more correct (127).

If self-will characterises the active aspect of the man abandoned to the "I-It" attitude, self-consciousness characterises the notion of that "I's" individuality which distinguishes it from the "real" person. Self-knowledge means "know thyself to have being," while for the individual it means, "know thy particular kind of being"; Buber thus suggests that an emphasis on individuality removes the person in question from true being (128). The relevance, for the earlier discussion on community, of this attitude which separates and distances is obvious. However, typically of Buber, nothing is left to stand as it was first stated for in fact the right directing of will can never be monopolised by the "person" as against the "individual;" it would seem they mostly act in combination. But the way that combination is expressed again raises the question of the built-in dualism in Buber's mind which seem to conflict with his concern for unity, a problem I will consider subsequently;

Every man lives in the twofold I. But there are men so defined by person that they may be called persons, and men so defined by individuality that they may be called individuals (129).

It is worth drawing attention here to Kaufmann's alternative translations of the two previous quotations from Smith's version of "I and Thou." Substantially the main difference is centred in Kaufmann rendering Eigenwesen, (literally, own being or self-being) as "ego" rather than "individuality." Kaufmann explains that Buber had protested to Smith about the use of the word "individuality." In a letter to him, Buber wrote,

But I cannot think of anything better. In French there is the word égotiste, which comes close to what I mean; but the English egotist unfortunately means Egoist, and that is something else (130).

Kaufmann decided to stay with ego, his only problem being that the word invokes Freud and psychoanalytic literature. In fact there is a

valid context for his choice of ego, as Friedman records that Buber attended Freud's lectures in Vienna and intended to write a book about him (131).

I must let this matter rest here except to point out that since I am concerned to survey the implications of the "I-It" attitude for Buber's understanding of the nature of man, what he gleaned from psychoanalysis and psychiatry undoubtedly had its influence. But Buber does not draw on the literature of psychoanalysis for his ideal of the "I", the fully-integrated, or individuated, free man. The examples he gives, are Socrates, Goethe and Jesus, representing respectively, the "I" of unbroken dialogue, of intercourse with nature, and of unconditional relation. The illustrations are simply those taken from I and Thou (132) which itself offers other models such as the "I" spoken by the mother and by the child, by primitive man, and by the teacher and psychiatrist. And consistently in his writings Buber refers both to the biblical prophets and to the Zaddik as exemplifying "I" in the fullest sense possible.

#### b) Good and Evil.

Buber argues against the traditional forms of dualism and takes up the position of saying that nothing is evil of itself, but that evil is a consequence of man failing in the decisions he makes, to realise the potential for good. I have already drawn attention to the point that there is nothing negative and certainly nothing inevitably evil in the "I-It" attitude itself. It only becomes evil if "man lets it have the mastery" to the point where he is overrun by the world of it and loses the reality of his own "I" (133). There is therefore, for Buber, nothing intrinsically evil in man's nature, he cannot "hide" behind a doctrine of original sin; which means he holds the balance of power between the two inclinations and with it the responsibility referred to in the discussion above. The misuse of this responsibility

gives rise to what Buber calls the "demonic Thou" which he illustrates by reference to Napoleon who he understands as having been the "demonic Thou" for millions of people. It represents a gross misuse of power, incapable responding to genuinely to the persona sphere (134). There are clear echoes here of Buber's understanding of Nietzsche's Übermensch. For Buber, Napoleon's misuse of power is thus an example of how,

the I-It attitude becomes a source of evil whenever the individual becomes so addicted to it that he remains absorbed in his own purposes and concerns when he should be responding in a fresh way to the beings he meets (135).

In communal as in personal life, evil is a consequence of the separation of the spirit from the "Thou." If in personal terms this gives rise to the "demonic Thou," in communal terms it gives rise to institutions which are divorced from the spirit and within which the potential for relationship and mutuality has been lost. Thus, "in communal life as in the individual it is not I-It but its mastery and predominance which are evil" (136). But here also man cannot dispense with the world of It since it is necessary to man's will to profit and to exercise in a responsible way such power as he achieved. These two, profit and and power, are turned to God when man's will holds them in the proper context of true relationship. The impulse represented by these needs is not evil until "separated from being." Thus, Economics, the abode of the will to profit, and the State, the abode of the will to be powerful, share in life as long as they share in the spirit" (137).

I have discussed above the idea of man's choice being free; what concerns us here is that the choices he makes will have either good or evil consequences. For Buber and for the Jewish tradition man's choice is therefore critical. Buber had always been aware of the Jewish notion of the "evil urge," the yetzer ha-rah. Since his discovery of Hasidism, he recognised that the "evil urge" can be

turned to God's service (138). This is a radical idea. In "I and Thou" he presents the view that evil exists as a potential realised at those times when man fails to make decisions because he lacks direction. In fact, Buber considers that if there is a devil, it would not be associated with "one who decided against God, but one who, in eternity, came to no decision" (139). Thus, as man, by choosing, can redeem the consequences of evil it is clear why Buber gives so much weight to the moment of decision. Rabbinical tradition also holds that the "evil urge" is necessary to man: "It is the power behind his impulse to marry, beget children, build homes, and to engage in economic activities" (140). Or as Buber expresses it:

In the creation of man, the two urges are set in opposition to each other. The Creator gives them to man as his two servants which, however, can only accomplish their service in genuine collaboration. The 'evil urge' is no less necessary than its companion, indeed even more necessary than it, for without it man would woo no woman and beget no children, build no house and engage in no economic activity (141).

In this respect Buber's I-It attitude seems to have its parallel in the Rabbinical notion of the "evil urge;" both are the means by which man experiences and uses the world. Further to this, the Rabbinical understanding of the "evil urge" went so far as to suggest that it could itself be regarded as "good," since it is included in the "good" referred to in the text, Genesis 1.31, when after the creation of man, "God saw all that He had made, and found it very good." Buber points out that the "very good" includes the evil urge, which is so, only because man has made it so. Man's responsibility is not therefore to extirpate that urge, but to reunite with the good (142).

In "The Two Centres of the Jewish Soul," a lecture given in 1930 Buber confirms that his thinking on the question of good and evil owes as much to the influence of Hasidism as it does to biblical and rabbinic teaching. I have already discussed, in Chapter 5, Buber's adoption of the central Hasidic emphasis that the "profane" is only a designation for what has not yet been sanctified (143). A more



original source for Buber's ideas might ironically be the philosophy and principles behind the mizvot. Appel points out that the Hinnuk's premise for understanding the object of mizvot are firstly that,

there is reason and purpose to the commandments. To this he adds a second, corollary hypothesis, namely, that the object of the mizvot is to further man's welfare (144).

It is this latter premise that is significant for my present discussion; it is argued that the observation of mizvot enables man to receive goodness from God, the only source of the good. It is by the neglect or violation of mizvot that man exposes himself to evil and come to grief (145). So far as the actual observation of mizvot is concerned, where this leaves Buber is clear. But as I have argued above, if in the end what is essential is the observation of the key commandment that our love of God should always be manifest in our love of our fellow-men, the essential mizvot will be observed, in principle if not in precept. Indeed this is seen as the path towards a "perfection of goodness". Appel refers to Sanhedrin 21b; and the Exodus Rabbah 6:1, to underline the point that,

the goodness exemplified by God that is to be emulated by man is not passive but active, because only the one who does good to others besides himself can be considered perfect in his goodness (146).

My point is to suggest that, for Buber, in the given moment man's free and active choice, while it may not be triggered by the observation of mizvot, is guided, indeed is energised and motivated by an attitude founded on principles and values derived from the same reciprocal sources, namely God's love of man, man's love of God and man's love of man.

Before I bring this section to a close, there is one further point I want to include. It is the idea that evil, (and thus good) is cumulative, that both in individual and communal life it can gather momentum and run out of any hope of control. Allied to this is Buber's notion of "radical evil" (147). The cumulative effect, the slide into an irrevocable state of evil, passes through two stages. The

first stage concerns those who lose their way to God because they fail, in their choices, to direct themselves towards the potential for good in each situation. The stage of "radical evil" concerns those who actively oppose God's will in their basic attitude; in the context of Buber's I and Thou, it means holding to the "I-It" attitude to the point which not only fails to meet the Thou of the other, but denies both the reality of the true "I" and the true "Thou" and thus admits the "demonic Thou". Even so the way to righteousness remains open from God's side; from the human side man chooses not to make available crucial "turning" (148).

It is important to record that Buber was reluctant to reach the conclusions about man's nature implied by the notion of "radical evil". Friedman notes that although the change of emphasis can be seen in Buber's writing from 1940, the concept of "radical evil" did not mature until 1951 (149). He was, in a sense, forced to it by experience. The idea itself gathered force as he responded to the remorseless momentum of active evil, through the First World War and the murder of his friend Gustav Landauer. The implications of such evil were finally forced on Buber by Nazism and the fate of the Jews and other peoples, (see Chapter 8) and by the Second World War which was preceded and followed by the Jewish struggles in Palestine.

Yet despite this concept of "radical evil" Buber retains a world-affirming and characteristically Jewish optimism. In summary it can be said that both are founded on man's freedom; his freedom to do evil enables him to redeem evil. Right decision brings both personal and communal unity to the world. Both by individual choice and by a collective sense of right direction man can expunge evil from the world. The source of such optimism is Buber's belief, (a basic Jewish belief) in the essential goodness of man as derived from the essential goodness of God, and that this will be manifest and given direction through the choices man makes each day. As Appel affirms, man has, or

can have, control:

How can the Torah presume to forbid a man something over which he has no control? Such a contention is specious, and only fools and men of wicked intent will argue so. It is within man's power to control himself and to restrain his thoughts and desires from whatever he pleases (150).

Buber might well have written this himself.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 6.

1. Horwitz, Rivka, Buber's Way to I and Thou, pp260-263, and Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I. p415 & pp417-418.
2. Friedman, op.cit. p417-418.
3. Buber, p13, The Legend of The Baal-Shem.
4. Friedman, op.cit. quoting Buber Briefwechsel II p92 #72, p297.
5. Buber, Between Man and Man, "Afterword: The History of the Dialogical Principle," p213.
6. Friedman, op.cit. p411, referring to Horwitz.
7. ibid. pp298-299.
8. ibid. p418.
9. ibid.
10. Rosenzweig, The Star of Redemption, p156f.
1. Friedman, op.cit. p419.
2. Horwitz, op.cit.
3. Friedman, op.cit. p419.
4. ibid. p420.
5. ibid.
6. ibid. p421 quoting Buber Briefwechsel II pp124-138 #103.
7. Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, p105.
8. Friedman, op.cit. p423.
9. Buber, Ich und Du.
10. Buber, Ekstatische Konfessionen.
1. Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, p49.
2. ibid.
3. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I p424.
4. ibid. pp441-422 Buber Briefwechsel II pp128-130 #104.
5. ibid. Friedman's foot-note comment p422: "Here as everywhere else these are my translations. Those of Rivka Horwitz are often in essential respects inaccurate."
6. Buber, Ich und Du, Um ein Nachwort vermehrte Neuauflage, Verlag Lambert Schneider/Heidelberg 1958.
7. Goethe, "West-östlicher Divan,"
8. Buber, Ich und Du, translated by Walter Kaufmann, Prologue p26.

29. Cf. Meetings, Between Man and Man, The Eclipse of God, Mamre: Essays on Religion.
30. Friedman, op.cit. p431, referring to Schaefer, "Martin Buber, Ein biographischer Abriss," Buber Briefwechsel I., p39.
31. Buber, Ich und Du, p83 and Kaufmann's note 6. p141, & note 5 p149.
32. ibid. Introduction, pi & pxi.
33. Barron's Educational Series, Inc. New York 1975.
34. Buber, op.cit. Kaufmann's comments, p40, p19, & p43.
35. Buber, op.cit. p36.
36. ibid.  
Deut:4.30, "when you are in distress because these things have befallen you and, in the end, return to the Lord your God and obey him."  
Isaiah:10.21. "Only a remnant shall return. Only a remnant of Jacob, to mighty God."  
Jeremiah:4.1. "If you, return, O Israel, declares the Lord. If you return to Me, If you renounce your abominations from My presence, And do not waver ... Nations shall bless themselves by you, And praise themselves by you."
37. ibid. pp36-37.
38. Friedman, op.cit. p428.
39. Buber, op.cit. p45-46 & Note 4. p61.
40. ibid. p60.
41. Buber, Ich und Du, p15.
42. ibid. translated by R.G.Smith p10.
43. ibid. translated by Walter Kaufmann, p61.
44. Friedman, op.cit. p15.
45. Buber, op.cit. p15.
46. Buber, op.cit. translated by R.G.Smith p11.
47. Buber, op.cit. translated by Walter Kaufmann p62.
48. ibid. p14.
49. Buber, op.cit. translated by R.G.Smith, p3.
50. Friedman, op.cit. p429.
51. Pfuetz, "Martin Buber and American Pragmatism," The Philosophy of Martin Buber p512.
52. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p19.
53. Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, p3.

54. Diamond, op.cit. p19-20.
55. Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, p142.
56. ibid.
57. Buber, Ich und Du, translated by R.G.Smith.
58. ibid. pp3-6.
59. ibid. p16.
60. ibid. p17.
61. ibid. p11.
62. Genesis 1:27.
63. Unterman, Jews: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices, p24.
64. TB. Sotah 3a.
65. Unterman, op.cit. p30.
66. Buber, op.cit. p90-93.
67. Buber, "The Prejudices of Youth", Israel and the World, p46.
68. Buber, "The Question to the Single One," Between Man and Man, p71.
69. Buber, Ich und Du, p3.
70. Cox, The Secular City, pp44-45.
71. Buber, op.cit. Postscript p131.
72. Cf. ibid pp131-132, and "Education," Between Man and Man, pp93-94, & p95.
73. Buber, op.cit. p9.
74. Macquarrie, Existentialism, p110.
75. Soloveitchik, Halakhic Man, p57.
76. Appel, A Philosophy of Mitzvot, p3-5.
77. Cf. On Judaism Chapter 5, etc.
78. Appel, op.cit. p87-88.
79. ibid. p88 quoting De'ot, 1:7.
80. Leviticus 19:18 Tanakh.
81. Appel, op.cit. p115.
82. ibid. p115 cf. Mizvah 243.
83. ibid. p115-117.
84. ibid. p116 cf. Mizvah 243.

85. Buber, op.cit. pp14-15.
86. ibid. p15.
87. Berkovits, op.cit. p105.
88. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I pp336-344.
89. ibid. p338.
90. Appel, op.cit. p110f.
91. Buber, op.cit. p44-45.
92. Buber, op.cit. translated by Walter Kaufmann, p155.
93. ibid. p46.
94. Appel, op.cit. p110.
95. ibid. p232.
96. Buber, Ich und Du, p11.
97. ibid. p11 & p33
98. ibid. p23.
99. ibid. p34.
100. ibid. p9 & p10.
101. ibid. p51.
102. ibid.
103. ibid.
104. Diamond, op.cit. p16.
105. Buber, op.cit. p53.
106. ibid. p57 & p59.
107. ibid. p57 & 59.
108. Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, pp230-232.
109. ibid. p270-71.
110. ibid. p42.
111. ibid. p35-36.
112. Altmann, Essays in Jewish Intellectual History, p41.
113. ibid. p50
114. Buber, op.cit. p96.
115. Berkovits, op.cit. p126.

116. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I, p127. My emphasis.
117. ibid.
118. Buber, op.cit. p51.
119. Soloveitchik op.cit. p141.
120. Buber, op.cit. p95.
121. ibid. p59.
122. Soloveitchik op.cit p19.
123. Buber, Ich und Du, p59.
124. ibid.
125. Buber, "The Life of the Hasidim," The Legend of the Baal-Shem p33.
126. ibid.
127. Friedman, op.cit. p113.
128. Buber, Ich und Du, op.cit. pp66-67.
129. ibid. p65.
130. Buber, op.cit. translated by Walter Kaufmann, pp111-112 & Note 7.
131. Friedman, op.cit. p352.
132. Buber, op.cit., transalted by R.G.Smith, pp66-67.
133. ibid. p46.
134. ibid. p67.
135. Diamond, op.cit. pp22-23.
136. Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, p64.
137. Buber, op.cit. p49.
138. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol. I., cf. for example p106f.
139. Buber, op.cit. p52.
140. Diamond, op.cit. p140.
141. Buber, "Imagination and Impulse" Images of Good and Evil, p39.
142. Buber, ibid. p40 & 41.
143. Buber, "The Two Centres of the Jewish Soul," Israel and the World, p34, also, Mamre: Essays on Religion, p25.
144. Appel, op.cit. p82.
145. ibid. p83.



- 146. *ibid.* p97.
- 147. Buber, Images of Good and Evil, p80.
- 148. *ibid.* pp60-81.
- 149. Friedman, The Life of Dialogue, p109.
- 150. Appel, *op.cit.* p95-96.

## 7. THE ETERNAL THOU.

The moment an attempt is made to examine Buber's understanding of the idea of God we encounter difficulties. He would say any statement about God can only be made, inadequately, from the attitude represented by the primary word "I-It", thus making of God an object of enquiry and therefore a part of the process of man's investigations. Buber is concerned to show that God can only be experienced as the "eternal Thou" to whom one responds out of the fullness of "I". In assuming the validity of subjective experience, it would seem at times that Buber believes a man with an experience is never under threat from a man with an argument. And yet at the same time he recognises the need to attempt to make valid statements about God, that even God is part of man's "melancholy fate", a Thou which must be treated as if an It. In fact while man will try and reduce any experience, including an experience of God to one of an encounter with an It, God can never become an It, that is, He is the only Thou that will not be touched by man's attitude.

The Eternal Thou can by its nature not become It; And yet in accordance with our nature we are continually making the eternal Thou into It, into some thing - making God into a thing (1).

While God cannot be touched by man's attitude, the primary word I-Thou, when addressed to God as the Eternal Thou, carries with it the nature of the attitude with which man makes that address. Consequently an understanding of the language Buber uses in making statements about God and in developing his ideas about man's encounter with God, is crucial. Throughout his life Buber cast around for the most suitable forms in which to make statements about God; broadly this search is cast within the tension of the different ways theologians and philosophers make their attempts. Buber resorts to paradox and to contradiction, to anthropomorphism and to symbolism, while all the time pointing out the dangers and inadequacies of any forms he uses.

In attempting to find a clear path through what is something of a labyrinth, I want to discuss the problem of language first and then proceed to a discussion of man's encounter with God.

#### i) The Problem of Language.

The problem of language, becomes one of how to make statements about God which keeps to a minimum the extent to which, in man's attitude, God is reduced to an It. To put it positively, how in speaking of God can one do justice to the reality of the encounter? In this section I want to discuss Buber's method of writing about God and the conclusions to which that method led him.

In his writings about God, Buber is perhaps at his most enigmatic and inaccessible. His critics have accused him of holding views which to some appear pantheistic and to others atheistic; all unite in the familiar criticism that for the experience he claims to have of God, he can provide no objective validity or guidelines. In trying to write and speak about God Buber was fully aware, indeed painfully aware, of the difficulties of doing so. Believing that for man life has meaning only in his encounter with the Eternal Thou, Buber was concerned throughout his life to guard the actual living nature of that encounter and to express it in such a way as to show the encounter to be a real and immediate potential for each person's existence. Especially on the subject of God and of man's relationship with Him we need to consider texts later than I and Thou. Although his work lays down the basis of what Buber had to say, he himself admitted to the need to write further on this and other subjects in order to explain more clearly what he meant and to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding (2). In trying to examine how Buber himself attempted to write about God it would be helpful to look more closely at the problems of doing so as Buber understood them.

He was deeply suspicious of the conceptualising methods of theologians and philosophers concerned by means of propositions to

objectivise the nature of God and man's experience of Him. Diamond points out that as, from Buber's point of view, there can be no objective criterion that will satisfy the traditional problems of philosophers, so there is no objective knowledge that can resolve the disputes of theologians (3). The problem is further complicated because of the difference between the basis of religious and philosophical enquiry. Buber understands the difference to be that,

philosophy is grounded on the presupposition that one sees the absolute in universals. In opposition to this, religion, when it has to define itself philosophically, says that it means the covenant of the absolute with the particular, with the concrete (4).

It was in the concrete where Buber met and always tried to solve the problem and in the Eclipse of God he tells the story of his meeting with a factory worker, who after the seminar Buber was taking told him that he felt quite at home in the world without recourse to a god hypothesis. Naturally Buber wanted to "shatter the security of his Weltanschauung", and after presenting the man with an argument based on analogies from physics to which the worker could not possibly have had access, the man, "raised his heavy lids, which had been lowered the whole time, and said slowly and impressively, 'You are right.'"

5) Buber was dismayed:

I had led the man to the threshold beyond which there sat enthroned the majestic image which the great physicist, the great man of faith, Pascal, called the God of the Philosophers. Had I not rather wished to lead him to the other, Him whom Pascal called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Him to whom one can say, Thou? (6)

Pascal was able to hold the two forms in some kind of balanced tension, but usually both theologians and philosophers have "logicized" God, and especially perhaps the theologians who are concerned to provide an objective and structured system which secures continuity and which seeks to contain within given terms of reference the nature of a person's experience of God. When philosophy tries to move into the sphere of religion, it loses objectivity; when religion

tries to philosophise it loses contact with the living essence of its subject.

Religion as a specification misses the mark. God is not an object beside objects and hence cannot be reached by renunciation of objects. God, indeed, is not the cosmos, but far less is he Being minus cosmos. He is not to be found by subtraction and not to be loved by reduction. (7)

Buber considers the difference between philosophy and religion is radical. For example: When religion speaks of a personal God, philosophy accuses religion of anthropomorphism and when religion speaks of God's immanence and shows faith to be "living in relationship to Being", philosophy shows that, "cogitative truth means making the absolute into an object from which all other objects must be derived" (8). Further to this, modern philosophy has tended to speak of God in terms of "idea" or as with Feuerbach a projection of man's own perception of his ideal self. Religion, on the other hand has always endeavoured to bear testimony to a God who has such personal attributes as to make possible, relationship. In addition, philosophy understands the spirit of man to be, as it were, a faculty functioning in its own sphere, independently of the whole person; religion would claim that spirituality emerges out of personal wholeness (9). The two differ also in intention, philosophy being, directed toward the investigation of essence, religion toward enquiry about salvation" (10).

Rather than stay with these general assertions about the difference between philosophical and religious enquiry, I want to look more closely at the charge of philosophy which neatly focuses the problems with which I am concerned here, namely that religion is concerned with anthropomorphism. Buber answers this charge in his criticism of Spinoza who he understands to have interpreted the teaching of Israel to mean that God is a person" with the consequence of a lessening of the Godhead. Buber, making a characteristically fine point says that,

the truth of the teaching lies in its insistence that God is also a person; and that stands over against all impersonal, unapproachable 'purity' on the part of God as a heightening of the Godhead (11).

If we now turn to Buber's Postscript to the 1958 edition of I and Thou (12), we find him adding a third knowable attribute of God to the two Spinoza has identified; that is, to spiritual and natural being, Buber adds, "personal being" (13). Diamond considers that this emphasis on, "the personal as a unique mode of being, is a central theme of Buber's thought, and of existentialism" (14). His refutation of Spinoza is, in effect, a "rescue" of the God of Israel.

Leaving, for the moment, this aspect of the discussion, I want to look at the same problem but from the point of view of symbol. Central to Buber's thought is the notion of the "imagelessness" of God and his resistance (and that also of Jewish tradition) to forms of representation. This has consistently posed a problem for Jewish philosophy and since words themselves can have an imagery function, it has always been associated with the use of anthropomorphic language and ideas. Talmudic and Midrashic literature uses anthropomorphic language as extensively as does the Bible and medieval Jewish thought has thus concerned to make the notion of God philosophically respectable by reducing the anthropomorphic terms of reference in traditional use (15). To enforce the imagelessness of a transcendent God and to resist the implications of anthropomorphism, Philo, for example developed a doctrine of intermediate beings, (including that of the logos), which God uses as mediating powers rather than acting directly on the world himself (16). Maimonides faces the problem in his interpretation of prophecy, that is in his understanding of the role of the prophet. He rejected both the Aristotelian notion that prophecy happens as a result of the influence of Active Intellect, and the simpler idea that God just chooses the person he wants without regard to his intellectual abilities. In one sense, Maimonides combines the two; the Active Intellect works not just on the intellect

of God's chosen channel, but also on his imagination. Setlzer, interestingly points out that Maimonides makes a distinction between the philosopher who uses only his intellect, the statesmen only his imagination, but the prophet uses both (17). It is because of his especially endowed imagination that the prophet did not use the language of philosophy, but communicated his message by use of metaphor and symbol, of which imagery and anthropomorphism were expressive.

What Buber applies his dialogical philosophy to is the problem lying beneath this discussion concerning the imminence and the transcendence of God; which is to say how can man out of the reality of his daily life, relate to a transcendent God in a way that is recognisable and relevant. Buber attempts an answer;

The religious reality of the meeting with the Meeter who shines through all forms and is Himself formless, knows no image of Him, nothing comprehensible as object. Symbols of Him, whether images or ideas, always exist first when and insofar as Thou becomes He, and that means It. But the ground of human existence in which it gathers and becomes whole is also the deep abyss out of which images arise (18).

However indispensable they are, symbols run the risk of assuming the character of icons, if not idols. Losing the function of being merely signs and pointers, "it finally happens ever again that they well themselves up and obstruct the way to Him, and He removes himself from them" (19).

What of the word "God" itself? Since:

God is the Being that is directly, most nearly, and lastingly, over against us, that may properly only be addressed, not expressed (20).

We must ask how is man to address Him meaningfully, as any mode of address can only ever be a form of representation? In 1922, a year before the publication of I and Thou, Buber was a house guest of the German philosopher Paul Natrop, who demanded of Buber:

How can you bring yourself to say 'God' time after time? How can you expect that your readers will take the word in the sense in which you wish it to be taken? What you mean by the

name of God is something above all human grasp and comprehension, but in speaking about it you have lowered it to human conceptualization. What word of speech is so misused, so defiled, so desecrated as this! All the innocent blood that has been shed for it has robbed it of its radiance. All the injustice that it has been used to cover has effaced its features. When I hear the highest called 'God,' it sometimes seems almost blasphemous (21).

Natrop is here clearly concerned with the debasement of the word itself as no longer being a suitable symbol for what it originally represented. It is an interesting objection and one well made to a man like Buber who was so concerned with finding just the right and genuine word. In one sense the issue focuses on the axis of Buber's dialogical philosophy since if one can make an intelligible exchange with another, concerning God, then presumably one has reached the degree of mutuality Buber would require. But Natrop's question implies more. It implies the possibility that if one approaches God carrying in our minds the associations that he brings to the word, then that approach will be fundamentally impaired. Thus, for Natrop, to rescue the word is tantamount to rescuing the relationship.

Buber replied that precisely because "God" is the "most heavily-laden of all human words", that it was "soiled and mutilated, "just for this reason I may not abandon it" (22). And he did not. In the opening of the third part of I and Thou, in which Buber discusses the "Eternal Thou", the influence of the Natrop meeting is apparent.

Many men wish to reject the word God as a legitimate usage, because it is so misused. It is indeed the most heavily laden of all the words used by men. For that very reason it is the most imperishable and the most indispensable (23).

It may seem to be a kind of perversity that Buber should wish to stay with the word God, it being so mutilated, and especially, as he prefers the term "Eternal Thou", but for other which reasons I shall discuss below. He argues that against all those who have misused the word to debase it to the point where it no longer has coinage, must be set all those who in the use of it have in mind the genuine God it represents and through its use find genuine relationship. It is an



interesting and practical illustration of Buber's application of the general Hasidic principle that everything we have to hand can be "turned" to the service of God, even the debased name of God. Buber thus challenges the basis of Natrop's position in that the latter still held to the view that there are fundamental distinctions to be maintained in terms of good and evil, and that further, to allow "all the injustices" to which the word God has been subjected to "effaced its features" is to allow, unnecessarily, the triumph of the evil urge.

Thus the use of the word 'God' is vindicated when in using it as a mode of address a person has in mind the "Thou", the "true Thou of his life, which cannot be limited by another Thou". When a man so addresses this "Thou", he addresses God. The point is clearly one of attitude and content; the attitude represented by the locution, "I-Thou" ensures the word "God" addresses Him uniquely, rather than being used merely to speak about Him. It is as a mode of address that the word becomes sacred. In one very important sense the mode of address one uses for another person has also real and not just symbolic significance:

The relation with man is the real simile of the relation with God; in it true address receives true response; except that in God's response everything, the universe, is made manifest as language (24).

The three-part structure of I and Thou, which begins with the I-Thou and concludes with the I-Eternal Thou encounter, indicates that one of the ways to the Eternal Thou is through the Thou of the other. But as Kaufmann goes on to suggest, for those who no longer have any use for the word "God", this approximation of You to the Eternal Thou, is too much. For those who still find the word "God" useful, the notion says too little. That it is too little is explicit in the nature of the I-Eternal-Thou language; it is too cryptic and enigmatic, too much like a formula. But Buber's primary word-pairs can be read both ways. He wants us to understand that we should

endeavour to meet each other in the fullness of real mutuality because in so doing we meet God; similarly our encounter with the Eternal Thou both illuminates and nourishes our interpersonal relationships. Inasmuch as the word-pairs represent attitudes they are, like all words, symbolic, but the attitudes they represent are actual. We come full circle and return to a previous aspect of the discussion, that is "the personal as a unique mode of being" (25).

In the reality of the religious relation the Absolute becomes in most cases personal. It is indeed legitimate to speak of the person of God within the religious relation and in its language; but in so doing we are making no statement about the Absolute which reduces it to the personal. We are rather saying that it enters into the relationship as the Absolute Person whom we call God. In our human mode of existence the only reciprocal relation with us that exists is a personal one (26).

Buber seems to be giving here a somewhat guarded warning against that danger of anthropomorphic language which personalises the idea of God too much. It seems a matter of degree. He recognises man's need to use a language which can "speak of the person of God" in the context of the relation. But he warns that in so doing we must not make the mistake of assuming that we have thereby personalised God. The language used thus makes a subtle but important shift in function; rather than anthropomorphise God, it becomes descriptive of how we relate to Him in a human and personal mode.

In what way then might Buber's coining of the phrase "Eternal Thou" be seen to be an advance on the word "God"? The "Eternal Thou" was never intended by Buber to be a new catch-phrase, designed to be the meeting-point of the God of the philosophers and theologians. It was not merely intended as a substitute for the word "God" to be used because it served the purpose more meaningfully. Friedman puts it succinctly: "The 'eternal Thou' did not mean God for Buber. 'God' meant the 'eternal Thou'" (27). That is it refers both to an attribute of God, (the personal) and to the dialogical nature of a person's encounter with Him. Diamond usefully suggests that:

by speaking of the 'eternal Thou', a symbol that, as set in the context of his philosophy of dialogue, expresses the transitory character of man's relation to God, Buber hopes to remain true to the reality of encounter (28).

What then have we so far? Buber acknowledges the problem of saying anything of God in such a way as to retain the living and reciprocal nature of both the mode of address and the immediate potential and expectation of a person's encounter with Him; Buber has considered both the philosophical and theological attempts and has found them wanting; Buber carries to this discussion one of the main themes of his dialogical philosophy, the personal as a mode of being. Buber offers the phrase, the "Eternal Thou" both as a way of response and address, hoping thereby to avoid the static and limited consequences of traditional symbolism.

Having on the basis of this discussion established the problems as Buber understood them, I can now consider more specifically the nature of the language Buber used in trying to meet them. In attempting all the time in his use of language to express the immediacy of meeting, Buber's technique involves the use of paradox. Paradox, both in the sense of statements being contrary to tradition and seemingly self-contradictory, is found at the heart of all true encounters between I and Thou. Diamond explains that Buber's use of paradox holds together simultaneously two propositions which from a rational point of view are incompatible (29).

The point is that real life confronts man in other than propositional forms. In actual encounter it is possible to confront contrary experiences and find in them an essential unity. It is only the processes of logic, of analysis, of the need for definition and for definitive statements that renders irreconcilable the seemingly paradoxical. Buber argues that the "unity of the contraries is the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue", that,

According to the logical conception of truth only one of two contraries can be true, but in the reality of life as one

lives it they are inseparable. The person who makes a decision knows that his deciding is no self-delusion; the person who has acted knows that he was and is in the hand of God (30).

There is an interesting relationship to be made here with the medieval attitude to paradox which some philosophers such as Albalag and Elijah del Medigo faced with the doctrine of "the double truth" which allows for the possibility that propositions can be philosophically untenable but religiously believable. However, what Buber wants to show is that, "the religious communication of a content of being takes place in paradox" (31).

Nevertheless, it is essential for my purpose to indicate that Buber does not use the idiom of paradox to demonstrate already-existing religious dogmas. Paradox exists in the reality of each man's experience just as it arises in the reality of Buber's. Here at least there may be grounds for objective criteria for subjectively-based assertions in that one person might meet another at the point which recognises a sharing of paradox, a mutuality of paradox. Throughout Buber's writings examples of such paradox abound and they bound also in I and Thou. As I am concerned here with the "Eternal Thou", the following examples which are all found on page 79 of I and Thou (32) will serve as illustration.

- i) "Men do not find God if they stay in the world. They do not find Him if they leave the world."
- ii) "Of course God is the 'wholly other'; but He is also the wholly Same, the wholly Present."
- iii) "Of course He is the Mysterium Tremendum that appears and overthrows; but He is also the mystery of the self-evident, nearer to me than my I."

Diamond sums it up:

it is the reality of his own experience and not the demands of religious dogma that leads Buber to assert the paradoxes of religion (33)

He goes on to point out that in doing so Buber has been influenced

by the teachings of Jewish tradition and illustrates his point by reference to the paradoxical sayings of the Rabbis and Hasidic Zaddiks. Indeed, throughout his writings Buber quotes pithy but paradoxical epigrams such as, "My God, where can I find you, but where can I find you not?" (34) Many of the Hasidic stories Buber collected and translated in his two volumes of Tales of the Hasidim, are concerned to present the notion that truth has more than one face and that, at the very centre of meaning, there exists paradox. "Question and Answer," is one such tale which treats this present subject. It is brief enough to quote in full:

The rav asked a disciple who had just entered his room: 'Moshe, what do we mean when we say 'God?' The disciple was silent. The rav asked him a second and third time. Then he said: 'Why are you silent?'

'Because I do not know.'

'Do you think I know?' said the rav. 'But I must say it, for it is so, and therefore I must say it: He is definitely there, and except for him nothing is definitely there - and this is He' (35).

The use of paradox, however, is not only a part of Buber's method but also descriptive of the way Buber is to be read or heard, and of the distinction he makes between talking about God and meeting Him. When we wish speech to represent an otherwise obscured reality, it is not possible to avoid "the paradoxical expression". This expression even then does not speak of God, but of meeting between us and God. Furthermore the it is the paradoxical nature of the expression which respects its incomparable, unsubsumable uniqueness where the thoroughly logicized ones do not (36).

What then, by means of the paradoxes confronting him, can man know of God? I return here to the need for anthropomorphism for Buber affirms that God meets man in relation only as a person. This throws an immediate problem since anthropomorphism being concerned with the limitations of persons endeavours to speak of the unlimited nature of man's meeting with God.

It is here Buber uses another term for God as companion to the "Eternal Thou" - the "absolute Person," which term is itself a paradox.

Can this be taken to mean that God, 'is' a personality? The absolute character of His personality, that paradox of paradoxes, prohibits any such statement. And if He was not a person in Himself, he, so to speak, became one in creating Man, in order to love man and be loved by him (37).

Thus anthropomorphism and paradox go together. Everything we know about God is derived from the language of interpersonal relations; thus we speak of Him as creating, as King, as being just, good, angry etc. etc. These and all the other terms used are the most direct and most vivid available to man. At the same time man balances the concepts carried by such language with the thought that God is wholly apart from the concepts so derived. In this way God is conceived as being an idealised Man, almost as a super man, being more powerful, more moral, with all His other attributes understood in absolute terms. In effect, therefore, the "absolute Person." The Bible is the main source of Jewish anthropomorphism but talmudic literature and the prayer book are also important sources. In the same way Judaism holds together the tensions between opposed concepts such as transcendentalism and panentheism, particularism and universalism, immanence and transcendence, as well as those issues discussed above, freedom and determinism, good and evil. Thus, Buber tells us that to speak of God as a "Person" is indispensable if what is meant is "God" and not a principle or an idea and if what we are concerned to express is a direct and creative relationship, since,

the concept of personal being is indeed completely incapable of declaring what God's essential being is, but it is both permitted and necessary to say that God is also a Person (38)

That the idea of God as One who enters directly into relationship with man in creative, revealing and redeeming acts is a deeply Jewish concept is clear from the anthropomorphism of the Bible. Buber understands that man's meeting with God is itself expressed and

understood in such terms with the result that he believes:

it is in the encounter itself that we are confronted with something compellingly anthropomorphic, something demanding reciprocity, a primary Thou (39).

It is from this style of Biblical language that Judaism is able to conceive of God in human terms, especially as concerns His fatherhood and His love of Israel.

Our meeting with God as a person could be construed as being what Diamond describes as "a special intuition of mysteries" (40) but in fact it is, for Buber, as suggested above, a real encounter understood in terms used for interpersonal relationships. Buber, long before writing "I and Thou", disavowed mysticism, (41) if by that is meant the kind of union with the Divine that requires or results in rejection of the world.

If that abundantly rich heavenly moment has nothing to do with my poor earthly moment - what has it then to do with me, who have still to live, in all seriousness still to live, on earth? (42)

On the other hand the earlier discussion on false notions of individuality, the misconstruing of the "I" to the point where man's attitude becomes solipsistic, represents the opposite extreme to a mystical absorption of self. For Buber, the "absolute Person" is met at the point where both the demands of present life and man's encounter with God are held in balance, at that point where,

it is not the I, then, that is given up, but that false self-asserting instinct that makes a man flee to the possessing of things before the unreliable, perilous world of relation which has neither density nor duration and cannot be surveyed (43).

To meet with God requires no special places, no special moments or occasions since "each process of becoming" enables us to approach the eternal Thou (44). The experience of such encounter is comprehensive, there is no separating out of those spheres which are appropriate and those which might seem not to be, since entering into the absolute relation gathers up everything into the relationship itself (45).

The question has to be asked: is Buber's concept of God simply an intensity, that is, an addition of particular I-Thou relations? Is God the sum of all the potentials for relation available to man? To say so, would be to reverse Buber's teaching; it is not the gathering up of all I-Thou relationships that at last defines God for us, since God is to be encountered wholly in one such meeting. Besides which to say God is a concentrate of the realisation of man's I-Thou encounters would, even then, be to limit Him, since neither one man, nor all men, could encompass Him. Buber puts it concisely: "Every sphere is compassed in the eternal Thou, but it is not compassed in them" (46). Furthermore, the thought that God can be so encompassed distracts from one of Buber's central ideas, namely that in our encounter with Him, God cannot be possessed any more than He can be wholly contained in our statements or descriptions of Him, since,

God, the eternal Presence, does not permit Himself to be held. Woe to the man so possessed that he thinks he possess God! (49)

For Buber the essential content of such encounter is revelation and the only content of revelation is God Himself. Revelation is God's active initiative towards man and therefore God cannot be sought, He can only be encountered: "it is a finding without seeking" (48). Here again man is engaged in paradox, indeed, a biblically based paradox, which tells us that "the living God is not only a self-revealing but also a self-concealing God" (49). This idea recurs in Buber's writing, suggesting that what is important for him is that the mystery of the otherness of God remains. Diamond suggests that this expresses Buber's protest against those religious and theological positions that believe they have bound up in their dogmas and creeds the totality of God to the point where mystery is exhausted. Furthermore to speak of a God who hides as well as reveals himself points to the mystery of the dialogue itself and to the tension that exists from our sense of both the nearness and remoteness of God (50). Buber's concern with this



theme represents his conviction of,

the unswerving faithfulness of God. This conviction is also the basis of Buber's assertion that, 'the eternal Thou can by its nature not become an It', that God is always ready to address man as Thou (51).

### ii) The Encounter with God.

This seems a suitable point at which to change the emphasis to a consideration of Buber's understanding of man's encounter with God, although the problem of language must continue to remain part of the discussion.

Since the encounter with God implies relationship with God, I want to discuss more specifically what relating to God means. I have already indicated that for Buber, "the relation with man is the real simile of the relation with God" (52), as a consequence of which he affirms the personal as a mode of being. The nature of the relationship man might enter into can thus also be understood as a partnership of mutual need;

You know always in your heart that you need God more than everything; but do you not know too that God needs you - in the fullness of His eternity needs you? You need God in order to be, and God needs you, for the very meaning of your life (53).

It is in his partnership with God that man experiences reality in its most potent form.

The most powerful and the deepest reality exists where everything enters into the effective action, without reserve the whole man and God the all-embracing - the united I and the boundless Thou (54).

Once this partnership is fully realised, man and God are inseparable, for "I know nothing of a 'world' and a 'life in the world' that might separate a man from God" (55). But Buber is concerned with a more complete unity than this; out of man's full partnership with God there arises a unified attitude to the world. A real relationship with God cannot exist at the same time with an unreal relation to the world, since, "you cannot both truly pray to

God and profit by the world" (56). This seeming ideal, the unity of man's partnership with God which results in their combined stand towards the world, contains problems. Apart from the now-familiar problem of Buber not being able to supply objective validity for his claims, there is a more fundamental problem. It can be accepted that man might experience a full relationship with God. After all this is the ideal of the teachings of most religions, Judaism not excepted. The problem arises when we consider what it means for man to stand with God before the world with a shared attitude. Unless man becomes as God, it cannot be that man might know or see the world as God sees it. As I will discuss below, part of man's duty is an emulation, or imitation of God, but that is as far as any similarity of attributes may be taken. Man will relate to God through that aspect of God which for man's sake assumes a personal mode of being but in so doing God retains essential aspects of His nature, to which by definition man can have no access. It cannot be therefore that man's experience of God is also an experience of all being. Further to this, if Buber is to be consistent with his refutation of mysticism, man as a finite person cannot relate to the uncountable potentials of all I-Thou relations. Either man relates fully to God and retains in the integrity of his true "I" a finite experience of "other Thous" or man, by way of mysticism, will somehow experience his union with them. Berkovits sums up the problem thus:

In order to accomplish such a feat, the capacity for the finite self for the encounter would have to be akin to the capacity of the absolute Person (57).

Man's "I" fully encountering the "Eternal Thou" does not mean, therefore, man's union with the "Eternal Thou." It means a fullness of meeting in which man retains his self-identity even as God retains a sense of mystery. How are we then to understand the nature of the "closeness" of relationship that might exist between man and God? Buber's thinking offers two possible answers. One concerns the notion

of mutuality in man's relationship with God which runs throughout Buber's writing, the other is the notion of the imitation of God. I wish now to look at each of these.

Jewish tradition affirms that the foundation of biblical religion is the encounter between God and man. But while Buber may take biblical religion as his starting point his idea that man encounters God in full mutuality seems contrary to that tradition. This diversion has given rise to one of the points on which Buber has been most consistently criticised and Berkovits' formulation of that criticism is typical and requires discussion; more importantly for my purposes it sheds light on Buber's Jewish self-perception. Berkovits considers that only the dialogues God had with Moses and Abraham begin to approach the nature of the meeting indicated by Buber's I-Thou locution, but since, "we are not told how the relation comes about we cannot thus judge the nature of the dialogue" (58).

Surely Berkovits is being pedantic and presses anthropomorphism too far when he concludes that it is too far-fetched to imagine that Abraham heard the voice of God addressing him "out of some natural event of his everyday experience"? (59). There seems also to be a serious contradiction in the basis of Berkovits' argument. In reference to the Abrahamic meeting with God he considers that,

whether such an interpretation was justified or not could hardly be decided on the basis of the record of the story itself (60).

But in the next sentence, as he begins to set himself up to criticise Buber, he suggests that,

in order to catch a glimpse of the nature of the biblical encounter, we have to see how the confrontation is described by those who actually experienced it (61).

Not only do we have this apparent contradiction, but there is implied the idea that those who experienced such encounters actually wrote the records themselves. My purpose is not a discussion of Berkovits; his concern about Buber's understanding of biblical

encounter has validity and it rests simply on the idea that on the basis of the records themselves man does not seem to meet God in the mutual and reciprocal way Buber suggests. If this is true it would seem that Buber's notion of man's partnership with God is also in peril; in which case, Buber is misled in thinking that the dialogical and mutual nature of man's meeting with God has biblical precedent.

Berkovits cites numerous examples to show that in the Bible man's meeting with God reduces him to terror, trembling, fear of death, fainting fits, loss of physical strength, insignificance and worthlessness, to the point that in contrast to the notion of mutuality man is made aware of his "utter helplessness in the presence of God" (62). Berkovits does concede that the "I" as Buber understands it survives but entirely as the result of God's mercy and grace.

He is not annihilated, but he is at the brink of nothingness. He is brought back into existence by the love of God. His I is returned to him as a gift of God (63).

Returned it may be, but not on a fair basis for mutuality.

There are numerous questions needing consideration, not the least of which is how the man of to-day, (and indeed a man such as Buber, whose life straddled the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,) is to approach reality and truth as represented by the Bible? Then it has to be asked to what extent were men like Adam, Abraham and Moses and all the other prophets typical as men who encounter God? It is not clear how Berkovits himself approaches the Bible; his criticism of Buber and others suggests he is not far away from a form of biblical fundamentalism. Buber offers three possible approaches that we might take in understanding both the biblical language of encounter and the encounters themselves. Either it is a figurative language which expresses a spiritual process metaphorically and allegorically. Alternatively it reports a supernatural event while interposing something unintelligible on it, in which case it would require man to

make a sacrifice of his intellect (64). But there is a third possibility,

it could be the verbal trace of a natural event, i.e., of an event that took place in the world of the senses common to all men, and fitted into connections that the senses can perceive (65).

For example in the crucial and formative encounter with God at Sinai, the record tell us that the mountain,

was all in smoke, for the Lord had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently ... As Moses spoke God answered in thunder (66).

On this encounter Buber comments that the people experienced this event as a revelation from God and as such it was preserved in the record for future generations. Further to this,

experience undergone in this way is not self-delusion on the part of the assemblage; it is what they see, what they recognise and perceive with their reason, for natural events are the carriers of revelation, and revelation occurs when he who witnesses the event and sustains it experiences the revelation it contains (67).

While the experience on Sinai was collective, the same principle of reception, memory and record applies to all such experiences, collective or individual, and Buber is consistent in acknowledging the revelatory content of these experiences in his major biblically-based works (68). The single element that unifies these encounters as Berkovits refers to them, the response they all seem to have in common, is fear. Buber never has denied that fear is a basic ingredient of man's approach to God. What Buber affirms is that despite fear one must persevere and endure the encounter to the point where fear becomes love; to love God without first experiencing the fear of God is to love an idol, for "the real God is, to begin with, dreadful and incomprehensible" (69). Buber here seems to suggest that to gain the level of mutuality in a relationship with God, it is first necessary to pass through the stage of fear at which Berkovits suggested man stopped. Buber goes on to say that before God man is terrified, and would despair of both God and the world if God did not

take pity on him by exercising his mercy. Thus the believing man must pass through "the gate of dread" (70).

While this answers to some extent part of Berkovits' criticism, it still leaves the problem of Buber's claim to ascribe mutuality to man's encounter with God. I have pointed out that in fact Buber claims only that the dialogical nature of man's relationship with God has biblical roots. Some of them may achieve mutuality and some may not. But mutuality does not mean, in any sense, equality, and this chapter has already shown that in the I-Thou relationship there are degrees of mutuality. In man's relationship with God full mutuality is the ideal to be realised. Buber recognises how difficult it is for man to experience God; if this happens, it will not be something that is sustained, that can be sustained, it will be a special event which will change a man's life and it will be an encounter which will bear evidence to the nature of his relationship with other men. The experience of true mutuality must be understood as a refinement of the experience itself, as something which comes, perhaps with practice, by the constant and faithful imitation of God. What is crucial is to understand that the varieties and degrees of man's encounter with God are in fact varieties and degrees of revelation.

The encounters cited by Berkovits as examples of man meeting God, or in Berkovits' terms more properly expressed as God meeting man, can only be understood as the exception rather than the rule. Adam, Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, were not ordinary men. They were in every respect exceptional men caught up in the formative period and processes which gave rise to the Jewish faith. In biblical terms the formation of the Jewish faith is synonymous with the origin and goal of God's creation, which means the origin and goal of the world. Is it to be supposed that the traumatic and galvanising encounters with God of patriarchs and prophets were intended as paradigms for all men at all times? Berkovits points to the way in which God appeared to such

men and to the effects that encounter had on them; what he fails to point out is that each example cited is unprecedented, for each is different according to the historical need of the moment and to the way in which God met it. So also are the types of men unprecedented, indeed with the possible exception of the Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad the world has never again seen men like Abraham and Moses. Thus it was to these latter and to men like the prophets that God revealed that side of His Face which occasioned overawing response. Thus there seems no reason why the unique experiences of unique human beings need to be considered as prototypes.

In his editorial postscript for Biblical Humanism, N.H. Glatzer discusses Buber's triad of creation-revelation-redemption (71) as progressive stages of God's communication with man. Creation obviously represents the beginning and redemption the end; these are fixed points but revelation, the centre, is not fixed, but is an ever-renewed and ever-present manifestation that, "defies generalisation, formulation, and recording (72).

"Buber" say Berkovits, "does not allow any contents in revelation" (73) This cannot be so. I have shown above that for Buber the essential content of revelation is God Himself and that the prime occasion for that revelation is man's meeting with Him. Far from implying that revelation had no content, Buber understands the Jewish Bible to be a record of the history of revelation and as such it "has power to guide the life of the man of to-day," and that "it demands that the individual fit his own life into this true history," so that we may understand and find both his origins and his goal (74).

The kind of encounters referred to above during the formative period of both the world and of Judaism, fall into the category of what Buber understands as "mighty revelations," in that they are intended to break new ground. In the context of world history, they belong by definition to a specific and, in this case, early period.

But revelation as a continuous process is sustained by what Buber calls "quiet revelations".

The mighty revelations to which the religions appeal are like in being with the quiet revelations that are to be found everywhere and at all times. The mighty revelations which stand at the beginning of great communities and at the turning-point of an age are nothing but the eternal revelation (75).

It is the quieter revelations that will characterise the nature of ordinary people's encounters with God. For those who have not been called to those unprecedented high offices which implemented the establishment of God's covenant, or through which the Law was received, their experience of God will be of a different order and to them God reveals another aspect of His Face. Testimony to these lesser but none the less real encounters abounds, both in the Bible and throughout Jewish history, and indeed similar testimony is found in other religious traditions from which Buber sometimes draws for illustration. Whether these encounters achieve mutuality must remain speculative and I do not intend to pursue the point further. But for Berkovits to deny mutuality is as speculative as it is for Buber to affirm it. Buber's point however, is that while sharing completely in Jewish tradition's belief that God's encounter with man is the basis of biblical religion, those encounters could not be the model of all subsequent experience. If Buber is judged to diverge sharply from Jewish tradition, he does so to affirm that each man who meets God is likely to do so in a way that, in some details at least, are unique to him. If Judaism accepts the validity of anthropomorphic language in other respects, consistency requires its acceptance of the possibility that as each of several people will experience one person in different ways, so will men vary in their experience of God. Thus revelation is not something which happened once, in the formative period of Jewish history, but something which happens again and again, to reinvigorate the faith and commitment of each generation. As the Hebrew Prayer



Book states, "God every day renews the work of the Beginning" (76).

In 1926 Buber published his essay, Imitatio Dei, and I want to conclude this chapter by considering the idea of,

The imitation of God, and of the real God, not of the wishful creation; the imitation, not of a mediator in human form, but of God himself - this is the central paradox of Judaism. A paradox, for how should man be able to imitate God, the invisible, incomprehensible, unformed, not-to-be formed? (77)

Buber does seem to go far beyond the concept of imitatio Dei reached by the medieval philosophers. For example, Maimonides, in discussing what man is capable of knowing of God includes knowledge of God's attributes of action, on which is based the extent to which man can imitate God (78). For the medievalists the imitation of God was thus expressed as a practical consequence of the intellectual love of God. Such imitation is an indispensable part of the attainment of perfection and as such is a characteristic of Buber's "perfect man". It is the imitation of God's loving-kindness which in Jeremiah 9:23-24, consists of the practice of mercy, justice and righteousness on earth. It is interesting to note that for Maimonides there is a political application of the principle of imitatio Dei which Buber does not appear to take up (79).

In personal life, however, Buber's emphasis is on the imitation of the real God. There is nothing to be gained in simply imitating an "idea" that we may have of God so the question must be asked, "On what can the imitation of God be based?" Judaism's answer is that we are destined to be like Him and that it is this notion that lies behind Jewish teaching. Buber makes one of several references to Midrashic sources; for example: "Today are ye like the stars, but in the time to come ye are destined to be like your Lord" (80). Imitating God is also associated with the biblical commandment to "walk in His ways," (Deuteronomy 8:6 etc.) Since this is also the "prototype for the imitation of God," it is for man the "way" of salvation as well (81).

Behind Buber's thought is a process. Man does not come out of his

encounter with God perfected but "in the way" which if followed may lead to perfection. He quotes the Gen. Rabbah on Psalm 100 as saying, "He hath made us, and toward him we perfect our souls" (82). The process of the perfection of the soul is also the process which makes perfect a man's likeness to God. Behind this concept of imitating God, is the basic notion of man being made in the image of God. The implication of our being destined to be like God is that we are also destined to bring "out of ourselves" in real life, the image in which we were created (83).

The Jewish basis of Buber's notion of Imitatio Dei is based on more than his quotation of biblical and midrashic texts. It is based also on a Jewish attitude to the world and to everyday life. The process is not confined to a spiritual realm unrelated to the world but is one which must be worked out in the reality of everyday life.

The imitation of God by man, can be fulfilled naturally only in those divine attributes turned towards the human ethos, in justice and love, and all the attributes are to be reproduced in the radically different human dimension (84).

It is in this turning of the divine attributes towards "the human ethos" that Buber most closely approaches the emphasis of Maimonides; and on the other side of this same coin, there is the "all sanctification" of Hasidism. That is to say, that the human ethos is the only relevant theatre in which man can bring to reality the divine attributes vested in him; it is this which makes possible the sanctifying of daily life in both personal and public affairs. In asserting that Judaism, above all other religions, understands the seriousness for real life of the fact that God created man, Buber quotes Rabbi Akiba:

Beloved is man, in that he was created in the image of God. But it was a special act of love that made it known to him that he was created in the image of God (85).

It is this knowledge that provides man with the incentive and energy to imitate God, to become, in his actions, as much like his

Creator as he can.

But what exactly is the Way? It would seem to be a combination of the two ideas indicated above; to imitate the Divine attributes so as to live a fully moral life and to realise the implication that in so doing man brings to light the image of God after which he was created. But how can man know whether he is walking in the "ways of the Lord" or not? Yet again Buber seems to require that we walk on the very edge of the pit of subjectivity. And yet here in this short essay there is evidence of what reads like Buber's radical second thoughts.

He asks:

how should man be able to walk in the footsteps of the Divine Presence? (86)

Answer:

Follow after the middot, the 'attributes', still better, the modes in which God works as far as these are made known to man (87).

The examples Buber gives of the modes in which God works include, nothing the nakedness of the first human beings, visiting the sick, Abraham in the grove at Mamre), comforting the bereaved, (Isaac after the death of Abraham,) and the Pentateuch's last recorded act of God, burying Moses Himself.

All these are enacted middot, visible patterns for man, and the mizvot, the commandments, are middot made human. 'My handicraft' as the Midrash has God say to Abraham, (Gen. Rabbah on 23:19), 'is to do good - you have taken up my handicraft.' God's handicraft, his revealed way of working, has been opened before us and set up for us as a pattern (88).

Is it established then, at the end of this discussion of Buber's "Eternal Thou," that he accepts the observation of commandments as being the only objectively-valid way for us to assure our right standing before God? The matter is characteristically opaque. Buber talks of "the secret of God which stood over Job's tent" and he tells us that,

just at the beginning of the wandering through the desert; just at the height of Job's trial; just in the midst of the terror of the other, the incomprehensible, ununderstandable

works; just from out of the secret. Only when the secret no longer stands over our tent, but breaks it, do we learn to know God's intercourse with us. And we learn to imitate God (89).

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 7.

1. Buber, Ich und Du, translated by R.G.Smith, p112.
2. Cf. *ibid.* Postscript p123f.
3. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, p41.
4. Buber, Eclipse of God, p56.
5. *ibid.* p14.
6. *ibid.*
7. Buber, "Dialogue", Between Man and Man, p58.
8. Buber, Eclipse of God, p44.
9. *ibid.* p46.
10. *ibid.* pp46-47.
1. Buber, "The Interpretation of Chassidism: Spinoza, Sabbatai Zwi, and Baalshem," Mamre: Essays on Religion, p102.
2. Buber, I and Thou, p123f.
3. *ibid.* p135.
4. Diamond, *op.cit.* p45.
5. Seltzer, Jewish People. Jewish Thought, p375, & Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, p56.
6. Guttman, *op.cit.* p28.
7. Seltzer, *op.cit.* p402.
8. Buber, Eclipse of God, p82.
9. *ibid.* p63.
10. Buber, Ich und Du, pp80-81.
1. Buber, Eclipse of God, pp16-17.
2. *ibid.* p17.
3. Buber, Ich und Du, p75.
4. *ibid.* p103.
5. Diamond, *op.cit.* p45.
6. Buber, Eclipse of God, p127.
7. Friedman, Life and Work, Vol.I, p356.
8. Diamond, *op.cit.* pp46-47.
9. *ibid.* p47.

30. Buber, "The Faith of Judaism," Israel and the World p17.
31. Buber, Eclipse of God p59.
32. Buber, Ich und Du,
33. Diamond op.cit. p48.
34. Buber, "The Faith of Judaism," Israel and the World, p15.
35. Buber, Tales of the Hasidim:Early Masters p269.
36. Buber, "Replies to my Critics", The Philosophy of Martin Buber, pp700-701.
37. Buber, Eclipse of God, p23.
38. Buber, Ich und Du, Postscript p135.
39. Buber, Eclipse of God, p23.
40. Diamond, op.cit. p49.
41. Cf. Chapter 5.
2. Buber, Ich und Du, p87.
3. ibid. p78.
4. ibid. p6.
5. ibid. p78.
6. ibid. p101.
7. ibid. p106.
8. ibid. p80.
9. Buber, Eclipse of God, p89. Buber's note directs the reader to Isaiah 45:15. "You are indeed a God who concealed himself."
10. Diamond, op.cit. p103.
11. ibid. p60. And cf. Buber, Ich und Du, p75 & p100.
12. Buber, Ich und Du, p103.
13. ibid. p82.
14. ibid. p89.
15. ibid. p95.
16. ibid. p107.
17. Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, p97.
18. ibid. p106.
19. ibid.

60. *ibid.*
61. *ibid.*
62. *ibid.* pp106-107.
63. *ibid.* p107.
64. Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible", Biblical Humanism, pp8-9.
65. *ibid.*
66. Genesis 19:18. Tanakh.
67. Buber, *op.cit.* p9. My emphasis.
68. Cf. *op.cit.*, & The Prophetic Faith, Two Types of Faith, et passim.
69. Buber, Eclipse of God, pp50-51.
70. *ibid.*
71. Buber, Biblical Humanism pp239f.
72. *ibid.* p240.
73. Berkovits, *op.cit.* p109.
74. Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible", *op.cit.* p5.
75. Buber, Ich und Du pp116-117.
76. The Authorised Daily Prayer Book.
77. Buber, "The Imitation of God", Israel and the World , p71.
78. Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, p406. Seltzer indicates that one of the bases of Maimonides' notion of man's imitation of God's attributes of action, is Jeremiah 9:23-24; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in the this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord who exercises mercy, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."
79. Altmann, Essays in Jewish Intellectual History. Altmann refers to Maimonides' discussion of imitatio Dei in Guide 1, 54: "assimilation to the thirteen attributes of God is said to be 'needed for the governance of cities.' "
80. Deuteronomy. Rabbah on 1:10.
81. Buber, Eclipse of God, p47.
82. Buber, "Imitation of God," *op.cit.* p72.
83. *ibid.* p73.
84. Buber, Eclipse of God, p72.

35. Buber, "Imitation of God", op.cit. p73.

36. ibid. p76.

37. ibid.

38. ibid. p76.

39. ibid. pp76-77.



## 8. BUBER'S PERCEPTION OF JUDAISM AND HIS CONCEPT OF ITS RENEWAL.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Buber's criticisms of Jewish religion and the ideas he had for its renewal. I have indicated in the Introduction and subsequent chapters that Buber passed from a disillusionment with Judaism to a recovery both of his Jewish self-identity and his Jewish faith. In broad terms it can be said that the former came about through his commitment to Zionism and the latter through his rediscovery of Hasidism. My line of enquiry will be concerned with the reasons why Buber found the Judaism of his day wanting and why he considered it to be inadequate to meet the needs of his Jewish contemporaries. In the process of this I will discuss what he believed he had to offer to make up that deficiency in terms of his concept of Jewish renewal. Firstly, some preliminary comment is necessary.

At the 1903 Zionist Congress Buber had represented the Bar Kochbans, (the Zionist student association in Prague,) who had adopted him as one of the leaders of the Democratic Fraction. This group became Buber's "community," and it was his addresses to them that constituted the first of a series of important and radical statements he was to make on Judaism. The first three addresses on various aspects of Judaism were published under the title Drei Reden über das Judentum, in Frankfurt am Main in 1911. A further edition appeared in 1923 to which Buber wrote a Preface in which he acknowledges previous "inexactness" and that it had become a cause of misunderstandings. The "misunderstandings" Buber wanted to amend concerned the already mentioned problem of the "becoming God" and its relevance for the idea of unity, the running theme of the problems associated with experience, the place of myth in Jewish religion, and the idea of Judaism being the vehicle for an existing religious reality. It is typical of Buber that his Preface was intended as an explanation rather than a correction, for:

I can describe what has happened to me only as a process of clarification, but not conversion. An explanation, I said - not an interpretation; for inherent in the process of clarification was the fact that my words became clear to myself, that I now understood what it was that I had then felt compelled to say, and that my inadequate words were adequate, after all (1).

The essays are concerned with Judaism as a "phenomenon of religious reality." What Buber means by this is that an existing religious reality has been made manifest in Judaism and that Judaism exists for the sake of this reality (2). This religious reality has to do specifically with the fact and the nature of the relationship between man and God. As discussed in the previous chapter, Buber speaks of God as the "Eternal Thou" which in the context of his developed dialogical philosophy, is experienced as "Reality" only in the moment of true meeting. In these early addresses on Judaism Buber was already concerned to get behind the God of the theologians and the philosophers, who in their effort to produce statements which have meaning and relevance, provide only metaphor and symbols, rather than direct expression of a direct encounter with the Divine.

Also we find in this Preface, Buber's continual preoccupation with Erlebnis and his attempt to qualify its significance;

Intrinsically, what really matters is not the 'experiencing' of life, (Erleben) - the detached subjectivity, but life itself; not the religious experience, which is part of the psychic realm, but religious life itself, that is, the total life of an individual or of a people in their actual relationship to God and the world (3).

The question of the immediacy of man's experience of God concerns previous discussions on mysticism and the notion of 'realisation'; Buber, as we have seen, is anxious to avoid giving the impression that God is to be transmuted from an abstract idea to a real event; that is he wished to avoid the implication that God "becomes" a reality only through man or within mankind (4). For Buber Judaism's primal reality, is simply stated: "the Jew, bound up with the world, is to relate himself to God in the immediacy of the I and Thou - as

a Jew" (5).

It is important to note that the three earliest addresses were to the Prague Bar Kochbans, and that all of them are to be placed within a particular social and political context which, however, does not deprive them of perennial value. In his editorial Postscript to On Judaism, Nahum Glatzer makes the important point that at the time in which Buber first presented these addresses, Jewish students found that Judaism had mostly lost its meaning for them and that while Zionism held out some kind of future promise it represented only a very general Jewish affirmation and lacked specific relevant content (6).

What gave to Buber's early addresses their strong appeal was their dialogical quality, that is, Buber responded to real questions brought to him by the Prague Bar Kochbans (7). Certainly he seems to be at his most perceptive and compelling when he is concerned with the real and personal problems of individuals and communities. He was able to focus on specific issues such as the significance of decision, individual wholeness and the challenge given to man to create unity. A second group of addresses lacked this specific focus and application and are more characteristic of Buber's own eclectic interests and an attempt by him to bring them to bear on his central concern for the problems of Judaism and its renewal. Further to this, as those problems remained very much the same, the second group of addresses are in some ways repetitive of the first. Whatever the relative merits of the two series may be, the group of speeches that make up the collection known as the "Early Addresses", provide one of the principal sources for an insight to Buber's understanding of Judaism. However, I will be concerned with an examination of Buber's final position in his understanding of Judaism; this was inevitably worked out as a reaction to his criticism of Judaism as a received tradition. I need to point out that Buber's criticisms of Judaism have to be

placed in the political and social context in which I have already discussed Zionism. Without reiterating that context it can be summarised by saying that Jewish communities in central Europe were faced with rising anti-Semitism to which individuals responded in a variety of ways, varying from identity with political and cultural Zionism, to a complete abandonment of Judaism by way of cultural and national assimilation. To this must added the experience and consequences for Germany, of the First World War.

In the second section of the chapter where I will be concerned to examine the central subject of Buber's understanding of Revelation and Law, I shall base my discussions on his controversy with Franz Rosenzweig. Buber's relationship and work with Rosenzweig flowered at a time formative to the recovery of Buber's Judaism and the establishment of ideas central to that recovery. Further to this, a serious difference of opinion over the subjects in question acted as a foil for his ideas. Franz Rosenzweig appears to lend authority to many of the polemics in which Buber was involved, and sometimes endeavoured to arbitrate between the protagonists, as for example in the controversies concerning Herzl and Hermann Cohen. Born in 1886 and thus eight years Buber's junior, Rosenzweig emerged out of a wealthy but assimilated Jewish family background into a distinguished university studentship centred on a study of Hegel. From that point he followed a path from disillusionment with Hegelian thought, and by way of personal crisis, to the religious existentialism of his Judaism. From 1913 Rosenzweig began a study of the classical documents of Judaism in which Hermann Cohen was a major influence.

In 1914 Rosenzweig visited Buber who already had a considerable reputation both as a scholar and the unofficial leader of the radical Zionist Fraction. Rosenzweig was never a Zionist; he supported its practical constructive work but rejected any theory of Zionism which seemed to define something essential in the nature of Judaism. It

never became a subject of discussion between himself and Buber, who invited him to contribute to a second volume of the almanac Vom Judentum to which he contributed a piece called "Atheistic Theology"; it was returned to Rosenzweig as being "unsuitable" (8). The projected collection of essays never materialised although the essay itself was eventually published six years after Rosenzweig's death.

The essay was in fact a sharp criticism of Buber's already published Three Speeches on Judaism. Rosenzweig's criticism was an attack on, a) a pseudonaturalistic idea of 'race,' b) the substitution of the supranational goal of the 'people' by the 'essence' of the people that is carried in its 'blood,' and c) the use of the oneness of God and the kingdom of God as mere historical examples of the longing for unity that dwells in the Jewish national character (9). Each of these themes will be included in my discussion below. The sum of these three points of attack suggested to Rosenzweig that there was no place in Buber's thinking for the notion of "revelation," and that consequently the hub of religious experience, the relationship and partnership between man and God, is displaced by a system which is man-centred and subjective.

The question of the influence on Buber of Rosenzweig's criticisms involves the odd incident referred to above concerning the rejection of the essay in which the criticisms first appeared. The matter of influence must to some extent remain speculative and subject to the interpretation of the evidence (10). The controversy did not seem to affect the friendship and working relationship of the two men; Rosenzweig became one of Buber's closest friends and collaborators to the time of his early death in December 1929. But the rejected essay contained themes over which Buber and Rosenzweig differed fundamentally and which formed in their time the basis of public discussion that still continues.

I turn now to a consideration of Buber's criticisms of Judaism and

of what he believed he had to offer towards the process of its renewal. For the sake of clarity, my discussion will be given under various headings.

### i) The Problem of Tradition and a Living Faith.

A basic concern of Buber's was the question as to how the individual Jew might discover and maintain a living Jewish faith. In seeking an answer to this question he makes it clear that the individual should not turn to tradition as "inherited custom", which calls on the unique blend of religion and nationhood, nor even to birth, but that each should search for the answer out of their own reality (11). Buber considered that Jewish custom and tradition had lost touch with that very reality which Judaism exists to represent. Traditional forms and practices allow a fervent profession of faith as an outward expression but do not, of themselves, ensure the critical condition, namely that faith should be fulfilled within the lives of individual Jews. Buber did not deny that there were periods in Jewish history when the authenticating spark of a living inner reality gave life to the traditional forms of its communal expression. He cites as examples the epoch of Moses, Judaism at the time of primitive Christianity and, as I have already discussed, its manifestation in later Hasidism (12). The problem, as Buber understood it, was that precisely because such experience is to be found in Jewish history, it remains only as memory and fosters the belief that through the proved and tried practices, that lost inner reality can be made alive once more. To put it simply: Buber endeavoured to reverse this proposition; the traditional forms could only be re-invigorated from within the life of the individual.

However, it cannot be ignored that for Judaism, the traditional forms and practices are an integral part of the religion and that even each individual can bring to them something of a faith which lives

as an inner reality, there are few who would be able to sustain this at all times. They would then be left with the tradition itself and the sense of community and belonging which this fosters. Buber does not seem to have given sufficient weight in his reading of Jewish history to the fact that it was precisely in commitment to the tradition that individual and communities found the strength and inspiration survive.

Much of Buber's concern for the state of Judaism as he found it, revolves around his use of the term religiosity, that is Frömmertum. He means by this an unconditioned, living communion with God and he intends the term to be distinct from Religion. It is this latter term which Buber uses to represent a conditioned system of laws, customs and doctrines which are adhered to rigidly as containing the content of a once given, always applied revelation. It would seem that Buber's use of religiosity is close to the term Glaube, faith, or belief. Thus he explains,

Religiosity is man's sense of wonder and adoration, an ever anew becoming, an ever anew articulation and formulation of his feelings that, transcending his conditioned being, there is something that is unconditioned (13).

This creative response to the unconditioned, Buber sets against the prescriptions and dogmas of a rigidly determined system handed down as binding on all future generations without allowance for the need of the individual to need and seek new forms. Thus, Buber understands the inherited tradition as uncreative, having its potential for creativity inhibited by the "yoke of the laws and doctrines." In short, for Buber, religiosity represents the creative principle and religion the organising principle (14).

He asks,

Is there an inherently Jewish religiosity? Is there alive in men of to-day and manifest in a community of Jews, a unique relationship to the unconditioned (zum Unbedingten) which can be called essentially Jewish? (15).

He concludes that no such community is to be found.

The matter of the content of Jewish religiosity I will examine under subsequent headings. For the moment I want to consolidate Buber's criticism of Jewish adherence to tradition by pointing out that his concern focused on the needs of Jewish youth. Buber is interested in the idea of youth's "openness," of mind, attributing to it qualities of perception and independence which are obviously idealistic.

Youth is the time of total openness. With totally open senses, it absorbs the world's variegated abundance; with totally open will, it gives itself to life's boundlessness. It has not yet sworn allegiance to any one truth for whose sake it would have to close its eyes to all other perspectives (16).

Buber may have in mind his own youth, but if so his idealism is added in that it fails to allow for all the uncertainties and fears, the rootlessness and sense of urgent quest that was so much a part of it. Also, Buber's perception of youth's open-mindedness may be somewhat romantic. This quality of openness, while it is certainly characteristic of some, is wholly uncharacteristic of those who, educated to the religious and political views of their parents and their peer groups, are in fact totally committed to a religious and even political inheritance and capable of consistent loyalty. Whatever the relative nature of the openness of youth's mind may be, Buber takes that mind to have a certain freshness and therefore to more readily be disposed to respond to the unconditional.

In the context of this concern for the uncreativity of traditional Jewish religious forms, he presents his ideas about religious education and the dangers of imposing on youth a religious system in the form of immutable and inviolable structures. He explains that religion is not to be imposed, that youth should not be pressed into a system; it should be concerned to awaken youth's latent response to the impact of the unconditional. In what follows, Buber's newly found Hasidic vision is evident;

We must not preach to youth that God's revelation becomes



manifest in only one, and in no other, way; rather, we must show it that nothing is incapable of becoming a receptacle of revelation. We must not proclaim to youth that God can be served by only one, and by no other act, but we must make it clear that every deed is hallowed if it radiates the spirit of unity (17).

Buber makes a crucial distinction in asking if the essence of Judaism is to be understood as "teaching," or as "law," and the notion of God as a conceptual abstraction or having existential relevance (18). For Buber, it was Torah itself that formed the focus of his concern about traditional Jewish attitudes and he took issue with Jewish tradition inasmuch as it presented Torah as law rather than as teaching. Thus,

its proponents bid Jewish youth to commit itself to Jewish law. By the term 'law' they mean the sum total of all the statutes, preserved first in unwritten form but later committed to writing, that God, according to tradition, gave Moses on Mount Sinai (19).

As indicated I will be concerned below to examine the specific problem of law and revelation. But the subject serves well to illustrate my present discussion. Buber concedes that something of the respect and authority associated with the tradition of the giving of the law, passed down by the reinforcing influences of many generations is given to those who truly dwell within it, that is,

to the man who with his total being adheres to its commandments and prohibitions, not because he was taught and conditioned to do so by his parents or teachers, but because he feels certain in his very soul that these 613 commandments and prohibitions are the core and substance of God's word to Israel (20).

He recognised that at the time (the period before and during the first World War) the will for community being so great motivated some Jewish youth to commit themselves to traditional teaching and law after all." But what of other sections of Jewish youth who cannot see their way back to Jewish community through the traditional observance of law? It is these that Buber is specifically addressing, and he asks what manner of commitment should be made? In answer, he reinforces his argument that we cannot be committed to any body of

Jewish teaching if that teaching is seen as something final and unequivocal. In the same way, we cannot observe the Jewish law, if that law is understood as being an immutable and closed system. What we can commit ourselves to, in Buber's language seem somewhat vague and for all his existentialist leaning, lacking in concrete application. He says that we can be committed to the "primal forces" and to the "living religious forces" which are active and expressed throughout Jewish religion, but which are not so expressed in either its teaching or its law (21). It follows from this that for Buber any process of Jewish renewal must involve a commitment to these primal and living Jewish forces, such as the quest for unity and the authority of covenant which I consider in detail below. What has to be kept in mind is that the primal and living Jewish forces constitute also a part of Jewish religious tradition, and to understand Buber's concept of the renewal of that tradition further comment is needed.

Kaplan considers the key idea to Buber's writings to be his clear understanding and acceptance of the fact that "the Jews have what to live for as a People" (22). He argues that while western civilisation has its philosophers, the Jews have their prophets who constantly hold before them the distinction between the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Buber made use of this distinction frequently and it was one which was critical for him since it provided the foundation for his understanding of tradition.

It would seem that at its best tradition for Buber consists of those aspects of the Jewish religion which exert a permanent and creative influence. But what are those aspects? What is it of Jewish tradition that Buber admits as having permanent religious value? In terms of the individual, tradition obviously revolves around the encounter with God as expressed in the shared life of the community.

Within the tradition there is much that needs to be preserved and much in need of constant renewal; thus tradition needs to be kept

alive. We have several things to hold in balance; that a tradition exist, that there are aspects of this tradition indispensable to the faith of Judaism, and that there is a need for continuity but also a need for change. Buber explains that continuity does not merely imply the preservation of the old. The Jewish continuum safe-guards its vitality to the extent to which the spirit is born in the life of each individual and the degree to which it is integrated into life. In this way the teaching of Judaism can be rejuvenated so as to ensure that it will bind Jewish people to the unconditional and not merely to an inheritance of forms (23).

Therefore, if we allow as valid, Buber's criticism of tradition based on the concerns outlined in this discussion, we can see how he turns that concern into a positive quest for its renewal. It is not, thus, tradition per se with which Buber is at odds, but with the assumption that tradition, merely because it has an ancient foundation, is therefore inviolable. It is in an atavistic sense that he understands the best of tradition to be the "memory" of the Jewish people, as that which one generation passes on to the next each with its own additions, its own new content in response to the demands of its own hour. In this lies the origin of what is unique and characteristic of Jewish history. Interestingly an element of nostalgia surfaces here in Buber's writing, an element which is frequently present and which makes its own contribution to an understanding of his notion of tradition;

There was never an am ha-aretz so hopeless that he could not teach his children what had happened. The Passover Seder is the most striking proof of this. Every man who set up a home knew how to conduct the Seder, and indeed with fervor. Much has disappeared from Jewry in the past one hundred and fifty years, but nothing is so ominous as the disappearance of the collective memory and the passion for handing down (24).

Despite Buber's opposition to the system of Halakha there is something that required him to keep a hold on tradition. I submit that the "something" was a combination of his own insecurity and his need

For a personal identity which he first found through the Bar Kochbans and subsequently within the movement for cultural Zionism. It has to do with Buber's understanding of the individual's need to confirm a sense of belonging in terms which go beyond an accident of birth, since,

"Israel" is not merely the result of biological and historical development; it is the product of a decision made long ago, the decision in favour of a God of justice and against a god of instinctive egoism. Nowhere else was the destiny of a people so bound up with its original choice and the attempts at realization of that choice (25).

Buber understands the "original choice" to have given to the Jewish individual his sense of origin; but it is not enough to identify in terms either of nationality or blood, with a choice that was made for the individual generations before. Each individual must make that choice anew for himself, and in so doing he acknowledges and receives the tradition that has been handed down to him. Only his own choice, however, makes alive in the present moment the spiritual significance of what happened so long ago. There are echoes here of Dilthey and my discussion of Gadamer in the context of the meaning of history.

Thus, in Buber's understanding of tradition, we have both denial and affirmation. Buber's criticises tradition at those points where he feels it to be inadequate to meet Jewish religious disenchantment and where it fails to safeguard against the temptation to assimilate offered by a kind of messianic social-secularism. As Haberman points out:

These two forces, the force of secularism and the force of traditionalism, stand opposed to one another but the presence of a third force is lacking (26).

This secular opposition is something faced by every religion and the response to secularism has been the energy behind modern attempts to make religion relevant and meaningful; hence, for example, the movements towards a demythologising of religion and the emphasis on religious humanism. Haberman's reference to the absence of a third

force which might, as it were, occupy the ground between religion and secularism, or arbitrate between them, was exactly the matter with which Buber was so concerned. Buber's notion of a "third force" was expressed in terms of interpersonal relationship by his concept of the "between" but it can equally be applied to that process of meeting which involves conflicting ideas, since ideas do not of themselves encounter one another apart from human agency. Buber also identifies this "third force" with the spiritual energy which emerges out of a true encounter with God and which must express itself in social action; it is in fact that force which brings about an invasion by the spirit both of the secular, and those aspects of religious tradition which have lost touch with faith as a living reality. Furthermore, it is exactly this force which can bring about Jewish renewal and the revitalisation of Jewish faith. It means, for the individual, an unimpeded access to God; for the community, and for the emergent and established State of Israel, it meant a firm basis for the revitalisation of the religion of the Jewish state.

Finally, I need to reiterate the point mentioned earlier that Buber was well aware that the need for renewal was not only manifest in his own times but was written large throughout Jewish history, as can be seen from the biblical record. He makes this quite clear;

As far as the tradition of Judaism is concerned: a few of its great expressions, beginning with the biblical and ending with the Hasidic, together constitute the strongest witness for the primacy of the dialogical that is known to me (27).

Only "a few" of Jewish traditions' great expressions pass the test. What is this test? Buber tells us that it is "the experience of faith that fell to his share" (28). Buber had to make the distinction between what became evident to him as truth and what did not, that is, he always attempted to make alive through faith the truths by which he lived. I suggest that his being unable to make alive by faith much that lies at the heart of Jewish tradition might

be explained by the shortcomings of his own faith and his inability to see Jewish tradition in terms of a "Thou" to be encountered. It might also be explained by the fact that Buber considered some aspects of Jewish tradition to be no longer essential to a living faith in the Jewish God and to a life arising out of this commitment, for example, the observation of mitzvot. Making this kind of choice is precisely the urgent demand of the hour that Buber emphasised so much. Certainly he respected those who "chose" to embrace Jewish tradition in its entirety for he would have hoped that by the act of choice the tradition had, for them, come alive by faith. That this should happen is exactly what Buber understands Jewish renewal to be.

#### i) Revelation and Law.

The controversy referred to above between Rosenzweig and Buber, did not re-emerge until 1923, when as a response to the publication of Buber's collected Speeches On Judaism, Rosenzweig wrote an open letter to Buber which he called, Die Bauleute. In it Rosenzweig appeals to Buber to reconsider what he felt to be a simple and crucial subject, namely his attitude to Law. Rosenzweig made the point that just as Buber had reinvigorated Jewish Teaching, (Lehre) for Jews of his time, he should mitigate his negative thinking about the Law, that is about the practical aspects of the Torah and the observation of mitzvot.

Such a discussion quickly involves the nature of revelation. It was a subject much in vogue at the time with the emphasis being on the "modernisation" of religion. This took various forms, such as Brunner's demythologising of biblical texts, and Jung's notion of religion as psychic immanence. The "modern" consensus seemed to be that if faith was to survive at all then it must do so without revelation. It was a view to which Buber did not subscribe (29); what did concern him was for Judaism an equally radical notion, namely,

that law could not be the content of any given revelation.

Undoubtedly in this aspect of his thought Buber reacted to the Kantian argument that law was a constituent of that kind of knowledge which discloses only a phenomenal world. Such detachment had no place in Buber's thinking or in the kind of commitment he required. Since, all true religion is an "I-Thou" relation with God, the event of revelation must form part of that relationship, that is, revelation as an event can only take place in that particular relational context. It implies partnership which in turn requires the relationship to be dialogical. Hence neither law nor dogma can be a part of true relationship since both deny the conditions of partnership and mutuality. Revelation happens only when the individual knows himself to be addressed and when this addressing can elicit a free response. What Buber understands as happening in a revelatory experience is a response to the event of God's presence rather than the communication of something as specific as information in the form of laws or commandments. But Buber is left with a problem, since the presence of God cannot be a vague or formless event simply because it is an address which calls forth a response. Buber argues however, that both the address and the response is personal to the individual involved in the event and unique to the circumstances in which it takes place (30).

I will consider the particular question of revelation and the Bible below, but the general terms of the present discussion are important since they serve to indicate what Buber considered the content of revelation to be. Buber was concerned about the authority of Law being based on the literal belief in the Sinai revelation; he was, therefore, in dispute with a form of Jewish Biblical fundamentalism. Both Buber and Rosenzweig rejected the notion of observing the Law on the basis of national custom and usage, as something which existed merely to be the visible sign of membership of

a specific nation. But Rosenzweig, perhaps influenced by Cohen, was concerned for the day-to-day religious significance of the observation of law, "as the sanctified form of life of this one people, Israel, as an everlasting token of its selection by God" (31). Buber's "direct and personal reaction to this challenge," was not, as Ernst Simon suggests, "rather short" (32), but took the form of an intense correspondence between the two men, as well as a more cryptic response in the form of Buber's novel, Gog and Magog, which "had not been recognised as a reply" (33).

The whole issue of the nature of revelation was brought to bear on the project the two men shared, namely the translation of the Old Testament into German. Buber's concept of revelation naturally determined his attitude to the Bible and hence to the task of its translation. That Buber and Rosenzweig could work so closely on this project suggests that on the subject of revelation, the two men were not very far apart, it taking place for both within the I-Thou relationship. Thus the object of revelation is the person and the content of revelation is intended to be personally apprehended. Where the two men differed, was over the question of the relationship between law and revelation; as Berkovits expressed it, "Martin Buber does not accept the traditional notion of a revealed law" (34).

To the dogmatists of the law, to those who accused Buber ofantinomianism resulting from a directionless subjectivism, he had already in 1919 made something of a reply in his essay, "The Holy Law." This was also in part a reply anticipating Rosenzweig, in which he advocates the life of "holy insecurity", based on the belief that God's revelation is a continuous experience rather than something given once and no more, in a form that must remain immutable and inviolable (35).

Rosenzweig's own acceptance of Law was based on his concept of the covenant which God continues to make with each generation of Jews who



themselves re-affirm that Covenant by a life sanctified in the observation of Mitzvot. Yet he conceded that each person should consider the Law in terms of what he felt able to do and maintain, thus making of it a relative rather than an absolute demand and the ethical content situational rather than something applicable at all times and in all circumstances. In brief, Rosenzweig made a distinction between what was "essential" and "unessential," and the process of selection that this implied was an entirely personal matter. In this way he hoped that Law (Gesetz) might again,

become commandment (Gebot) which seeks to be transformed into deed at the very moment it is heard. It must regain that living reality, (Heutigkeit) in which all great Jewish periods have sensed the guarantee for its eternity. Like teaching, it must consciously start where its content stops being content and becomes inner power, our own inner power. Inner power which in turn is added to the substance of the law (36).

In this way he hoped he might make his appeal to Buber irresistible, invoking Buber's own thinking about the potency and primacy of "deed," and the relationship between "living reality," and inner power." In fact Buber was deeply moved. In a letter he told Rosenzweig that his "Builders" had moved his "inmost soul," and broken through a "secret door."

If I answer you. I must now really express what has long been withheld. In terms of ideas, yes, but at the same time autobiographically - much more intimately so than in the Foreword\*; for what I really have to say to you can only be taken from the secret archives of the person. (37. \* Referring to The Preface to the collected edition of his Speeches on Judaism)

Seven years after Rosenzweig's death Buber agreed to have his correspondence with him on the Law published in the "Shocken Almanac." The collection of letters was entitled, "Revelation and Law" and in the first of the letters he explained that it was his, Buber's) faith which prevented him from accepting Rosenzweig's premises that Law and the word of God could be identifiable. It was in the same letter that Buber declared that for him revelation can never be law-giving, in the sense of that law would be passed to him

through the mediation of tradition. He was concerned only with the unmediated word of God to which it was the individual's responsibility to hold himself ever in readiness and which would be directed to "a specific hour of life" (38).

That God's word was available to him in the hour in which it was needed constituted the central part of Buber's faith. It is faith in the dialogical nature of man's relationship to God and that in the immediacy of this relationship that God is revealed. It was impossible for Buber to share Rosenzweig's assertion that the full body of Law was divine in origin before man's appropriation of it. While Buber could accept that Law could be turned back into a command of God's, he could not accept Rosenzweig's insistence that it could always be so; for Buber, it was the responsibility of the individual to discover if any particular command was a command for him.

I want now to discuss Rosenzweig's and Buber's co-operation in the project of translating the Hebrew Bible into German and the important matter of Buber's attitude, to and understanding of the Bible. As with most of the tasks Buber undertook, this had its origin in the need and demands of a real situation, in this case of the adult students of the Frankfurt Lehrhaus. As it seemed too much to require them to learn Hebrew and Aramaic there was the need for a good German text which might stimulate the reader to turn back to the original Hebrew. Diamond notes that,

This was probably the first time in the history of the Old Testament translation that fidelity to Hebrew, rather than to the language into which it was being set, was made the primary aim. Rosenzweig and Buber preserved the word play of the original, even where they had to construct new forms of German words in order to do it (39).

Buber had dreamt of a new German translation of the Bible since before the First World War and his desire to pursue this gathered intensity the more he came to realise that the Bible would form the core of any educational programme undertaken which itself would be the

basis of Jewish renewal and hence a spiritual resistance to anti-Semitism. It was intended to carry Jewish learning to German Jews, even to encourage the reader to turn from the German and to learn Hebrew; but it was also intended to reach and to enlighten German Christians among whom a form of neo-Marcionism (40) was suggesting that Christianity should cut itself free from all association with the Old Testament (41).

Although Rosenzweig was very ill and desperately handicapped he and Buber worked together from 1924 until the former's death in 1929 by which time they had completed the translation as far as Isaiah (in the Hebrew order of the Bible). Buber continued alone and did not finish the task until 1961. In 1926 he gave a lecture which became the basis of an essay entitled, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible" (42), which gives important insight into what the Bible actually meant to Buber and hence to his thinking as he embarked on the huge task of its translation;

The so-called Old Testament constitutes the greatest document of such reality. Two traits set it apart from the other great books of the world religions. One trait is that in the 'Old Testament' both events and words are placed in the midst of the people, of history, of the world. The second trait is that in the Bible the law is designed to cover the natural course of man's life (43).

If "the man of today" is to believe the Bible he must bring a new attitude to it which will allow him to approach it with his whole being. What is necessary is an open-minded attitude free of all prejudice since the,

Jewish Bible demands that the individual fit his own life into this true history, so that 'I' may find my own origin in the origin of the world, and my own goal in the goal of the world (44).

It is here, between the origin and the goal that Buber finds what for him is the true function of revelation and it is significant that he uses the basic structure of Rosenzweig's Stern der Erlösung to make and to illustrate his point.

Insight into the reality of the Bible begins with drawing a

distinction between creation, revelation, and redemption. Franz Rosenzweig, in his Stern der Erlösung, has the great merit of having shown this to our era in a new light (45).

Thus man will find his origin in creation, his goal in redemption and the midpoint, revelation, as something to be experienced in the present.

What Buber understands of his task then, is to translate the Jewish Bible as an historical documentation of a world moving between creation and redemption by way of revelation which the I experiences of "I am there" (46). Thus for Buber the Bible is a document of a constant process of revelation, ever-present and ever-new in the experience of those open to receive it. What Buber understands to be the condition of the "man of today," is as one who resists "being here" with his innermost being, and as one closed to the reception of an ever-demanding revelatory process. He is the man who knows neither origin nor goal simply because he is not available to the midpoint of revelation because he finds the responsibility to be so, unendurable (47). Buber insists that Jewish renewal will be achieved only if the individual accepts his responsibility and recognises his need to listen to that which the voice, sounding forth from this event, wishes to communicate to him" (48).

I can now turn more specifically to the question of Buber's attitude to the Bible. He makes constant appeals to biblical tradition for authority and precedent. He does so because he recognises the Bible as the fullest record available of the origins of Jewish tradition. Walter Kaufmann in his introduction to his translation of I and Thou, suggests that one of Buber's principal aims was in fact, to establish the biblical sources of his ideas (49). Nahum Glatzer in his postscript to Biblical Humanism, draws attention to the intimate bond existing between Buber's exegesis of the Bible and his dialogical philosophy (50). Buber understood the Bible as a "Thou" existing to be encountered by the individual; reciprocally, the Bible addresses man

as a "Thou". For Buber the teaching of the Bible was expressed as dialogue between Heaven and earth, and he understood the Bible to be a record of this dialogue. Further, we are indebted to the Bible because it provides among other things the fundamental axioms of life:

If the first biblical axiom is: 'Man is addressed by God in his life,' the second is: 'The life of man is meant by God as a unit' (51).

Thus far does Buber acknowledge the traditional place of the Bible in Jewish religion. To this we can add his assertions that it is the book's function "to witness to the spirit's will to perfection" (52), that it has the "power to guide the man of today" (53), that it offers in the broad terms of the origin and goal of history a universal framework within which man may live his life (54).

What then might be said about Buber's interpretive principles? We can find in them an understanding of history and an application of those hermeneutic principles which Buber derived from Dilthey, and which I have discussed in chapter 3. Broadly, these concerned Dilthey's concept of Das Verstehen, a method of understanding based on the assumption that men experience life as meaningful. Further to this, Dilthey required that whether we are concerned with the broad sweep of history, or with the interpretation of specific texts, the individual must be thoroughly acquainted with the concrete context of their origin. In the main these principles are apparent in Buber's collaboration with Rosenzweig in the translating of the Hebrew Bible into German. Max Brod believes that Buber's interpretive principles are the same as those found in his methods of translation and are designed to allow the text to speak out of the original meaning of the Hebrew words, as directly and as simply as possible. In so doing, Brod considers Buber remains close to tradition and in a distinctive way his interpretation "lies somewhere between literal acceptance of the text and vapid cleverness" (55).

### iii) The Problem of Dualism and the Unity of God.

Buber understood the basic problem of Judaism to be the enigma and contradiction of its dualism (56). He considered that the Judaism of his day had settled into the traditional forms in which that dualism expressed itself; this was to be seen most clearly in the acceptance of the basic division of life into sacred and secular realms, and he believed that it was the Law and its rigid application that hardened the edges of that division. I have fully discussed, that it was through his interpretation of Hasidism that Buber found the model and the spiritual energy out of which might be achieved the renewal of his basic Jewish problem and the attitudes which represent it. It was from this source that Buber derived his insight into the potential for the sanctification and hallowing of everyday life, even to the point of turning evil, as misdirected passion, back to the service of God.

I have also drawn attention to the fact that in the basic formulation of Buber's dialogical philosophy, there seems to exist a built-in formula for dualism; that is the word-pairs I-Thou and I-It represent the twofold attitudes through which man approaches the world. I suggest that Buber established the basic attitudes from which he developed his dialogical philosophy in such a way as to reflect this inherent problem in Judaism. In so doing he represented the condition out of which man has to work to achieve the desired unity. Furthermore, by this means, Buber acknowledges that the Jewish enigma of dualism is to be found there from the beginning, evident in the first documents and particularly in the myth of the Fall recorded in the Book of Genesis. He concludes that this establishes beyond doubt that the elements of good and evil are the most distinct and at the same time the most effective of what constitutes our inner dualism (57).

In terms which seem to echo Cohen and a Kantian debt, Buber holds

that the Jewish perception of dualism is a matter of subjectivism only, it is not part of reality; while Judaism understands man to be 'grounded in dualism," neither man, nor the world are inherently divided, rather they are separated; man "has fallen, he has become inadequate and, unlike God (gottungleich)" (58). Thus Buber understood Judaism's problem to be that it had accepted its "grounding" in dualism and had lost sight of a parallel and potent energy, namely, its striving for unity (Einheit). Any renewal of Judaism must re-activate and apply this potency since,

it is this striving for unity that makes Judaism a phenomenon of mankind, that transforms the Jewish question into a human question (59).

Buber contended that the Judaism of his day had lost its belief in the possibility of redemption from its inner duality. Duality being subjective requires its remedy to be effected by choice, a choice between the categories of good and evil. The choice when faced, and when exercised in the full acceptance of the responsibility it implies, is an affirmation of the inherent unity of life, inspired by the Jewish belief in the unity of God. While I shall be concerned below with a further discussion of Buber's understanding of God, we can sense here Buber's influence from Hasidism, in that God's unity while existing independently can be made manifest in the life of the individual, not just by faith, but by actively turning to God, each moment of his life and the encounter thus presented. It is, as if the Jew affirms to God his inner duality by striving to present to God his achieved inner unity.

Buber considers that the renewal of Judaism in this vital organ of its body, is simply a matter of the Jew becoming a "believing Jew", that is a person with whose faith lives for him as an inner reality, since the believing Jew is already a whole, as opposed to a divided Jew. It is this belief that will take the individual back, "to that mythical time, to that childhood-like time of an original, as yet

undivided, existence" (60).

The whole dynamic of Jewish creativity is generated by this striving for unity and it is out of his striving for unity that the Jew "conceived the idea of the unitary God" (61). Within the Jew then, Buber considers that the fundamental process is the unification of the soul. He quotes the Midrash at the Genesis Rabba XCV11,2. "Only by being undivided will you have a share in the Lord your God" (62). By this means the Jews triumph over duality. It is within this fundamental process that Buber understands the real significance and implication of galut, exile, which from the real of event of Jewish history becomes for Buber a powerful metaphor of Judaism's spiritual condition, which he understood was characterised by an expulsion "from the very core of our existence," and by a barren, as opposed to creative, intellectuality which was "fed by bookish words", and which engaged in "interpretations of interpretations" (63). We find here another reason why Buber maintained a commitment to Zionism despite his deep disillusionment with active politics. It concerns a conception of unity that has to do with land (see my discussion below) which again provides both a historical point of reference and the real need and opportunity of the hour, since he understands land to provide "natural unity," for a unified and well-rooted community. In terms clearly derived from his influence by A.D.Gordon, Buber speaks of the sustaining unity of the soil," which itself can prevent Jewish inner quality "from degenerating into ambivalence and instability" (64).

Before turning to a discussion of the implication for renewal for Buber's understanding of the unity of God, I want to reinforce some of the above points by further comment on the origin of the Jewish yearning for unity. Buber suggests, in language which is immediately more philosophical, that the origin of the Jewish concern for unity has to do with the context in which phenomena appear. He suggests that for Judaism, this context has always been more significant than



the individual phenomenon as such, and therefore Jewish religion is disposed to see the community more clearly than the individual (65). Just as individuals as phenomena are bound into the single concept of community, so has the Jew a natural and instinctive tendency to see all phenomena bound into a single concept. Thus, according to Buber, the peak of the spiritual process represented by Judaism, is reached when both sources, the phenomenological context and the Jewish unitary tendency,

converge in the God-idea of the prophets. The idea of a transcendent unity springs into being: the world-creating, world ruling, world-loving God (66).

I have discussed above that this convergence finds its energy in the innate Jewish longing for redemption from inner duality and the desire to be raised to absolute unity. This longing reaches its peak in that spiritual process which presents transcendent unity as immanent to the point where "a synthesis between the faculty of conceptualisation and that of yearning was found" (67). I want, thus, to move to a discussion of Buber's understanding of God as the focus of this convergence.

I have already discussed in Chapter 7, the problems of language associated with Buber's discussion of the idea and the term God, and have shown why he retains the word itself. Thus while for his dialogical philosophy he has coined the term "Eternal Thou," he sees no necessity to dispense with the traditional term of reference in his concept of Jewish renewal.

Buber believes in a God who is the origin and goal of all things and that in the bringing of the world to perfection, man is God's companion and fellow-worker. It is here, in the context of the relations between the Creator and the created that Buber sees the greatest need for Jewish regeneration. All the discussion above concerning the consequences of unquestioned adherence to tradition focus in the vitality of the individual's relationship with God. It is

here also, that Buber understands the primal Jewish quest for unity has to be worked out. A person's relationship to God is to be determined by the nature and direction of that person's individual choice. On this matter we can conclude that Buber considers the Omnipotent God to have endowed man with freedom of action within which he can turn to God or away from Him, he can serve Him or act against Him (68). What emerges from man's choice to co-operate with God in the continuing process of creation is man's need of a model to imitate. This imitation sets up what Buber calls a "life-system" as opposed to merely a "thought-system." This life-system:

proclaims the Being as exemplary for man, as that which alone, if imitated by man in his life-attitude and social structure, brings order and meaning into earthly existence, and on whose realization on earth by man depends, in fact, the survival of man qua man (69).

Buber leaves us in no doubt at all that the quality of our relationship with God determines the quality of individual and collective humanity. Only in this relationship is our potential as human beings realised. It is this striving after a suprahuman model which is the determining principle of life, the true meaning of which is to be found only in relationship with it (70).

I have discussed the extent to which this imitatio Dei has profound implications for Buber's thought both concerning Judaism and its relationship to other religions. Leaving aside for the moment the matter of how this imitation is effected, the problem has to be considered as to what exactly it is that man is expected to imitate. The truth for Buber is that man is called to imitate nothing less than God in his irreducible wholeness and absoluteness. And herein lies a paradox, since our model is both invisible and incomprehensible. Furthermore, imitation is only possible when we have an idea of what we are to imitate, but the moment we form an idea of God we are removed from the One whom we conceive. To imitate a conception would therefore be no imitation of God (71).

While one can appreciate the cautionary note Buber sounds here, I have to conclude that he compounds the enigma. Presumably God knows what He has created and is aware better than man himself of the problems he is likely to have; consequently, one assumes, man is equipped with all the necessary tools and attributes needed for the fulfilling of His purpose and will. Of these tools, mind and language have their central and essential part to play. I cannot agree therefore with the implication of Buber's formulation of the problem, that left only with a concept of God, man is merely chasing a shadow of His real Being.

A possible solution might be found in Buber's understanding of what it means for man to be made "in God's image." If we take as our starting point the I/Eternal-Thou encounter, we can deduce that the I recognises something of itself in the Thou so encountered. What the meeting manifests is an image of God which is also an unfolding of the subjects essential self. Buber seems to remain close here to Spinoza but not to the point of the self becoming a displacement of God. Rather what takes place in Buber's understanding is a heightening of one's own uniqueness, since he would argue that the image of God which resides in each individual is different. It would seem that this is what Buber's meanings by perfecting ourselves "toward God" (72).

There is another possible answer to the problem as to what it is in which the individual engages by an imitation of God. It is to be drawn out of my previous discussion concerning the implications of God giving to man freedom of action and choice. In the context of what it means for man to imitate God this freedom shifts the ground of the relationship between the Creator and the created to one of a "dialogue of history" (73), that is, a partnership between man and God, a joint participation in action of which history is the record. Thus, as life lived, imitation becomes a matter of expressing the attributes of God in terms of social ethics, and I have already examined the

implications of this in Chapter 7. I can summarise this possible solution to the problem thus: The individual by recognising in his encounter with God something essential in his own being, (a perception of self), is immediately engaged in something more immediate and relational than an idea. Furthermore, by manifesting this recognition in terms of the quality of the life he lives, the individual is engaged, not merely in the practice of a moral principle, but in the expression and manifestation of the attributes of God.

I have said that I believe that Buber over-complicates the problems man has in making an adjustment between his concept or idea of God and relating to the reality of a true encounter with God in all his living fullness. Earlier, I have argued that such a complete dialogical encounter must be a rare experience and even allowing for the biblical precedents, there are few who could sustain it or who could claim it. That is, when man encounters the Eternal Thou, it is likely to be a qualified experience relative to the individual's spiritual openness and capacity. I would therefore conclude that the paradox represented by God's omniscience and man's freedom of choice, resolves itself in the dialogue between man and God through which by a continual exercising of choice man shares with God in the ongoing task of reforming an inner dualism and making manifest the essential unity of which God is the fullest image. Buber places the discussion firmly back into the world of the Kabbalah and of Hasidism, when he says that the man of faith, "has the power to unite the God who is over the world with his shekinah dwelling in the world" (74). Thus, to recall my fuller discussion in Chapter 5, the hallowing of each moment of life is the way to the realisation of God's image within us, the community and the world at large.

I must mention again that Buber radically changed his mind about the idea of the "becoming God," held in his earlier days. It is not, as Buber is careful to say, a question of the realisation of God

through man, rather is it the adjustment of the parallax of the two images, the one which is of God, and the other which resides in man, to the point where they are perfectly in focus. Buber is consistent in understanding that in this respect, the tradition of the Hebrew Bible presents the awesome fact of the immediacy between God and man, arising out of which everything in both nature and history present an infinite language of signs which are to be read as Aussprache, divine pronouncements (75).

Thus God is to be encountered both in history and in nature but here Buber introduces not so much a paradox but a notion that attempts to come to terms with what both in the Bible and subsequent human experience is a continual mystery: God reveals Himself but also hides Himself. This "hiding" can be seen in one sense as that withdrawal which allows man's freedom of choice. But, there is more than this involved in what the Prophet of the Exile had in mind when he recorded that God "hideth His face from the house of Jacob" (76). Exile itself, has to be understood as a time when the dialogue between heaven and earth is interrupted and God seems to be "withdraw Himself utterly from the earth," at which times it becomes very difficult for the person who believes in the living God, to live (77).

Buber lived through such a time himself. This is to be understood in terms of the socio-political circumstances of European Jewry between the wars and subsequently after 1945, and also in terms of a post-Nietzschean "God is dead" philosophy and the more general effects of secularisation. Buber formulates the inevitable and unavoidable question thus: "how is a life with God still possible in a time in which there is an Auschwitz?" (78) Thus both the revealing and the hiding of God is for Buber bound up with the problem of good and evil. Buber does not adjust the ground of faith; he simply changes the imagery from visual to aural symbols. He concludes that in the most terrible times, nothing changes, there are no dramatic extra-

terrestrial rescues, evil continues to prosper and to demand redemption through a faith which hallows by suffering, by turning the moment, the hour, back to God who although apparently hidden, continues to address man and awaits his address (79).

All men, somewhere, in some loneliness of their pain or of their thought, come close to God; there is no invulnerable heathen. But the Jew, bound up with the world, immured in the world, dares to relate himself to God in the immediacy of the I and Thou - as a Jew. This is Judaism's primal reality (80).

The matrix which maintains the Jewish continuum and which Buber understood to be in urgent need of renewal, is thus made up of the interaction of a self-revealing God and the person who uses his freedom to choose a co-operative and creative partnership with Him. What binds this partnership together is God's unerring loyalty to man expressed in Covenant, (see my discussion below) and man's loyalty to God demonstrated in the expression of faith.

The question arises as to what was Buber's understanding of faith and its function. He makes an important distinction between emunah (trust) and pistis (belief) (81). Here, Buber seeks to draw in anti-arcionite terms, not only a distinction between these two types of faith but also a distinction between the religion of Jesus and that of Paul. More pertinent, however, is Buber's explanation of the meaning of faith in Moses where he is careful to point out that emunah, gathers together such notions as trust, firmness, staunchness, etc, which result from an original relationship to God, that is, they are born out of historical experience (82). On the other hand, the Greek pistis as used in the Gospels, is concerned with the assertion that something is true in the sense of a belief attached to an idea born outside the historical experience (83).

Against the background of this discussion, I suggest that we can see more clearly why Buber was concerned for those Jews and Jewish communities whose faith had been replaced merely by an adherence to

traditional forms of practice and observation. In seeking to establish a movement for Jewish renewal, Buber was thus concerned to re-state the grounds on which faith in God might be realised by the individual as a living reality strong enough to meet the challenges and needs of the hour.

In my examination of typical criticisms of Buber, I have shown that his thought has been questioned on the grounds of philosophical inadequacy and because it does not accord with orthodox Jewish tradition. There are, however, other important questions to be asked about Buber's ideas which I submit have been neglected by scholars, and these arise out of the problem as to whether Buber's ideas are workable to the extent of providing a practical basis for the life of Jewish people. I will be concerned with this question in the my final chapter. At this point I can conclude, that faith in God is, for Buber, a practical faculty applied to our daily life as an act of the will; it is not some vague feeling-sensation which results from an "experience" of God, since God is not an experience. Faith is active participation, it is the commitment implied in the notion of covenant and in the reciprocity existing between God and man but which is manifest in the degree of mutuality achieved between man and man.

#### v) Covenant, Community and Land.

These themes which concern Buber's concept of Jewish renewal, have their focus in the central question which occupied him: what does it mean to be a Jew? They make a considerable contribution towards an answer to that question, and I will be concerned with it again in my conclusions. I have already discussed that Buber first realised his sense of Jewish belonging through his commitment to Zionism. He brought to this commitment a religious idealism which was uncompromising and failed to persuade his political opponents to adopt a manifesto based on the concept of Zionism's cultural orientation.

Buber regards the destiny of the Jewish community to be both bound up with the unfolding of God's will for the world and the means of its realisation. This much, Buber understands as being the implication of Israel being a chosen people.

Consistently he has set himself against the kind of individualism that might lead to a fracturing of community, of unity, of anything that might blunt Israel's perception of God's purpose or anything that might distract Israel from the task of carrying it out. Running through all his work is the theme that Israel can only fulfil this task from the base of a renewal of its religious life. This, as we have seen, is the context in which is to be understood both his deep disappointment in the failure of cultural Zionism and his withdrawal from formal politics.

His dialogical philosophy does seem to place the emphasis on the individual, that is on the individual's realisation of his "I" and subsequent realisation in relationship to the "Thou" of other individuals. The "Thou" of community and of State seems less apparent and more abstract, but in fact it is precisely here that Buber would look to see the realism of the Jewish faith played out. He is suspicious of any form of nationalism, believing that through such a movement the Thou of State and community are reduced to an "It." Further to this he has consistently held that the Jewish way of life can never be a private matter. It is,

a way of life that cannot be realised by individuals in the sphere of their private existence, but only by a nation in the establishment of its society (84).

We can thus conclude that for Buber the individual cannot achieve his true life as a Jew other than by his commitment to the Jewish community. This is to be understood in terms of Jewish nationhood being the context in which God should be served; the individual's commitment to the Jewish people is thus not simply an expression of national solidarity but concerns his destiny as a Jew (85). Further



to this, Buber understands that it is precisely in the individual's relation to the community, that the Jew finds his greatest security; this is derived not only from the inheritance of a millennia of symbols and forms through which he can serve God, but also from the fact that the "the faculty," the spiritual energy which originally created these forms is available for him to tap for the creation of such new forms and images as might be necessary (85).

This is important for it makes application again of Buber's basic principle for renewal, namely that the received tradition of Judaism requires regeneration through the inner reality of faith that each individual brings to the community. It also advances Buber's idea that tradition, as given, is not to be understood as something which is complete or final.

At the same time as we consider the implications for Judaism of the individual's commitment to Jewish society, we must keep in mind the implications of a faithful Jewish society committed to the sum total of God's creation, that is to the world. In a letter to Gandhi, for example, Buber makes this point explicit by explaining that the innermost truth of Jewish life is bound up with Jewish community on Jewish land and that this has significance not only for Jewry but for all humanity (86). Thus, Buber explains that a Jewish community could only be really effective in the world as a people established in unity on its own land (87). Both the reasons for Buber's assertion and his authority for making it are to be found in his understanding of covenant and I shall consider this below. What we find here is a simple explanation of Buber's commitment to Zionism and why he believed that the cultural Zionism he represented could be an effective vehicle of Jewish renewal.

Somewhat characteristically Buber qualifies this statement by introducing a cautionary note. He makes a fine, but important distinction between a Jewish State as such, and a community of Jews

iving out a vital Jewish, religious life. What is at stake is the security and future of Judaism and this is dependent on the extent to which the Jewish community brings to life and keeps alive "the primal Jewish relationship to God, the world, and mankind" (87). What we are considering, in fact, is the idea of "a holy people." Everything Buber has said of the individual in terms of a committed relationship to God and the responsibility of choice, applies to the community. If it is hard for the individual, the difficulty of the task is magnified in the community. Nevertheless, God calls the people to hallow itself in its communal life. By this hallowing it will become a "holy people", free to answer the divine call and to make those choices which will express either a "yes" or a "no" to God. But the people as Jewish community, is more than an addition of individuals responding to God's address, "it is something existing beyond that, something essential and irreplaceable, (89). I want now to try and indicate what Buber understood this extra dimension to be.

I have suggested above that on the authority of biblical tradition Buber understands revelation to be the moving point between creation and redemption. I have also shown that out of Hasidic teaching, Buber takes up the central concept of man working in partnership with God in the continual process of creation through the application of the principle of what we can call "all-sanctification". Thus, by taking these two concepts together we can see that in terms of human history the Jew understands the Covenant to be the contractual basis of this partnership. In Chapter 4, I considered the the significance of Zionism, of the relationship between Covenant and election; it is this conjunction that creates the bond between the "holy land" and the "holy people". It was an integral part of the Covenant that conditional on Israel's faithfulness, the elect would occupy their own land. This is one of the primal ingredients of the contract as recorded in Genesis 12:1-2, and which the Sinai Covenant confirmed as

the Israelis progressed towards the "Promised Land" (90).

It was of biblical roots such as these that Buber endeavoured to remind his Jewish contemporaries caught in the tensions between a policy of assimilation which implied a denial of Jewish religion and culture, and an extreme political Zionism which was concerned only with a nationalistic ambition. He appealed to Jews to remember whose people they were and why they were elect; thus he taught that the primary source of Jewish renewal was vested in the original terms of God's Covenant with Israel (91). There was therefore the event of historical precedent to inspire the making real of a present faith.

We can proceed now to another aspect of the notion of land as a built-in condition of Covenant, namely to the idea of God being the owner of the land; it is a concept which for Buber holds the key for the renewal of Jewish community;

this idea of God as the sole owner of all land is the corner-stone of the Jewish social concept. It corresponds to the idea, in the political sphere, of the sovereignty of God, that is, of God as sole sovereign of the community (92).

In tracing the biblical history of this concept, Buber explains that while through Christianity the West assimilated much that was Jewish, the centrally and uniquely Jewish notion of realisation in community was nullified by the old dualism which lacking the will for unity, banished (and thus negated), the potential of realisation to an other-worldly realm. This historical apostasy was something Buber read into the contemporary condition of Jewish community; he believed that as a people, the Jews had lost faith in the possibility of maintaining the terms of Covenant actually in community. As I have shown, he believed that a merely political Zionism, devoid of Jewish cultural inheritance and empty of real faith, offered no solution at all to the problems of the Jewish people. In Hasidic terms, he taught that while the Jewish people found themselves in a state of exile in an alien world demanding continuous adjustment and adaptation, it could be seen that the divine Presence, the shekinah, was also in

exile. For the shekinah is at home only where there is a potent will for Covenant and its realisation (93).

What are Jewish people to do in order to turn the situation back to God? Buber offers three possible answers; a) The way of humanitarianism, b) the way of formal nationalism, and c) the way of religious conservatism. Each of these ways have been and are being tried, and each of them are found either wanting in essential qualities or characterised by invidious compromises. The "Holy Way", the only true way, Buber concludes is, "the way leading, through Zion, to the renewal of human community" (94).

In a sense, the holy way, is a way of compromise between the extremes offered by alternatives. The renewal of Jewish community is not to be found in either the extremes of secular politics or withdrawn spiritual life. The Divine is to be realised in the present, in the natural existences of our daily lives. More specifically, in the context of Covenant and Land, Buber exhorted his fellow Jews to follow the ideal demanded by the prophets of,

humaneness rooted in the soil. The establishment of a true community cannot come about unless the agrarian life, a life that draws its strength from the soil, is elevated to a service of God and spreads to the other social classes, binding them, as it were to God and to the soil (95).

We can see immediately the appeal this would have for a Zionist settlement of Palestine whether of a political or cultural emphasis and again we can hear the echo of the land-mysticism of A.D.Gordon. Buber, of course, does not assume an exclusively agrarian life for the community he envisages. Whatever the individual's role might be, Buber's concept is one of a God-given, (Covenant sanctioned) stewardship of the Land; it is on this basis that a true renewal of community is to be built. It is in the shared life of men that the Divine is to be realised, thus,

the Community, in its multifarious forms, as local community, co-operative society, fellowship, and brotherhood, as the cell-unit of every community in which the immediate

relationship between man and man, the carrier of the Divine, assumes lasting shape (96).

Buber considered that the condition of the diaspora Jew, living in varying degrees of isolation or assimilation in their host countries, lack all the basic ingredients for true community. We are reminded here of his own problems of cultural pluralism and identity outlined in Chapter 2. Given that it is the destiny of Jewish people to be established as a nation,

all the elements that might constitute a nation for him, that might make this nation a reality for him, are missing; all of them; land, language, way of life (94).

These essential elements belong instead to those among whom it is the fate of Jews to live, whereas they should arise naturally out of the "community of his blood." Thus the Jew if the diaspora does not see his substance unfold before him in his environment; it has been vanished into deep loneliness, and is embodied for him in only one aspect: his origin (98).

The intensity of this atavistic call, echoed all down the suffering chain of the generations, lies behind the cultural idealism that Buber took to the Zionist movement and from which he emerged a disappointed man. What is needed is for Jews to affirm the inner reality, represented by the notion of blood, which is:

the deepest, most potent stratum of our being. The innermost stratum of man's disposition, which yields his type, the basic structure of his personality (99).

"And what good does it do us to realise all this?" Buber asks. It is the way to unity and coherence, it is the way to heal the existential divisions confronting the Jewish people, the schisms between orthodoxy and liberal attitudes, between Zionists and assimilationists, between political and cultural or pacifistic Zionists. Such unity and coherence is dependent on how the individual exercises the responsibility of choosing between the outward world of impressions and the inner world of substance, which is to say, between environment and blood (100). The choice does not imply the virtually

impossible task of relinquishing the cultures of the societies within which the Jew lives, for in many cases these have been deeply absorbed and have become over long periods an integral part of Jewish people. The point is not to allow these elements to distract the Jew from his mission and certainly not to rule over him. Thus the choice concerns a decision for the way of Jewish renewal; it is what Buber considered to be,

the personal Jewish question, the root of all Jewish questions, the question we must discover within ourselves. Whoever, faced with the choice between environment and substance, decides for substance will henceforth have to be a Jew truly from within, to live as a Jew with all the contradiction, all the tragedy, and all the future promise of his blood (101).

#### 2) Problems Concerning Buber's German/Israeli Identity.

My discussion in the previous section brought together the notions of Covenant and Land as the biblical basis for Buber's Zionist ideals. After moving to Palestine in 1938 and despite his withdrawal from formal politics, Buber continued to try and influence government policy in terms of his continued commitment to the principles of cultural Zionism. He assumed this responsibility through the period of the establishment of the Israeli state and subsequently for the rest of his life. In this section I want to discuss the problems which arose for Buber associated with his German self-identity and his continual role as a representative of the principles of cultural Zionism. I will argue that his concerns for post-war Germany were in conflict with his identity as an Israeli citizen and that this conflict gave rise to a certain confusion in his own self-orientation.

I have already referred in the earlier chapters to the German identity that Buber eventually established arising firstly out of the German cultural and literary influence of his grandparents' home. Little of the Polish Jew Buber claimed to be in his youth remained by the time he was twenty; it was entirely overlaid by a complete German

identity. This identity included an affiliation with German Jewry which was "not only close to Buber's heart but a part of himself" (103). This was nowhere more clearly expressed than in his use of the German language and his achievements in the context of German culture. Such was affirmed by Rosenzweig and others in his Festgabe: From Unknown Writings, which he compiled in 1928 on the occasion of Buber's fiftieth birthday. One of those contributors, the scholar Wilhelm Michel, wrote of Buber,

He belongs to us; he is ours. In him it is the German hour of destiny that speaks, however exclusively he appears to be concerned with the particular problems of Judaism ... No one can speak the German language as he does without being profoundly and seriously committed to the fate of the people from whom this language springs (104).

This new-found identity was not achieved without difficulty and controversy (105). Buber's sense of German identity was crystallised in 1919 when Landauer was murdered in Munich. In defending Landauer's claim to a martyr's death and in identifying with him, Buber claimed himself to be, "a German at heart - and a proletarian at heart" (106). This identity with Landauer established the tension of Buber's German-Jewish identity. Because Jewish communities lived as a minority in their host countries, Landauer had written that the Jewish nation always carried its "neighbour" in its own heart (107). Inevitably, as for thousands of other Jews, Buber was confused when that "neighbour in the shape of that section of the German nation which had come to power, began to tear out the heart of the Jew" (108). In one sense, Buber may have felt the tensions and confusion more than most since his idealism lead him to believe that a renewal of Judaism would sufficiently reinforce the Jew to resist anti-Semitism to the point of overcoming it; he believed it to be an evil which could be "turned" back to God and redeemed. Further to this, he always endeavoured to maintain a distinction between the policies of the German rulers and the mass of ordinary German people who he felt were not involved to

the same degree in such political policies. It was a distinction that was to prove an embarrassment to him when he assumed Israeli citizenship. Thus Buber felt within him not only the sufferings of his fellow-Jews but also of his fellow-Germans. These distinctions also took the form of social and religious categories, that is, it was the social which lent its force both to Buber's sense of being German and to his practical work as a teacher, and it was the religious arising out of his maturing Judaism which gave to the former its necessary sense of direction (109).

Buber gave expression to these distinctions in his writings and lectures which were cast in terms of German cultural references. His most frequent platforms were the Zionist Congresses where his use of language, phraseology and especially of quotations seemed to be quite natural. They were, "a part of his intellectual outlook which he had fully assimilated, and he postulates the same for his audience" (110). But in so doing, it seemed that Buber made a radical mistake; he often misjudged the German consciousness and cultural commitment of his fellow "German" Jews;

The particular German-Jewish character of his style of thought and speech is demonstrated by its assumption of particular cultural associations on the part of the audience which was naive and almost certainly unwarranted (111).

This is important, for it provides one indication as to why Buber later became isolated from German-Jewish settlers in Israel and the almost unanimous body of opinion sympathising with their anti-German attitudes. Despite this problem he established himself as a critic of totalitarianism and a fearless opponent of the National Socialist Party, spiritual resistance to which became the subject of his public addresses (112). Spiritual resistance concerned precisely Buber's terms for Jewish renewal discussed in the above sections of this chapter. Whatever one decides about whether his teachings can be practically applied in the daily life of the individual, it has to be kept in mind that the context in which he applied his principles of



renewal in the educational programmes he undertook, was a context in which those principles were tried and tested to the limit. I have shown that in his political idealism his inability to compromise resulted in his own withdrawal from practical politics; his spiritual idealism in face of the kind of evil present in Germany from the early nineteen-thirties onwards, was no less exacting. The difference is, that in the field of politics Buber's decision effected only himself; in the field of religious education which was seen as the basis for an answer to the problems of the Jews, Buber assumed a responsibility for others. Thus the extent to which what he taught was seen to be relevant and applicable to the situation in which Jewish people found themselves, became a critical matter. Yet even here, Buber was uncompromising; he taught that it was the destiny of Israel to renew the "primordial bond", (the Sinai Covenant) which had come into being out of circumstances of similar distress (113).

He called the German Jewish community to self-criticism, and pointed the Jews towards confession of sin as the first step towards the redemption of evil. His judgement of the condition of contemporary Jewish life seems harsh; it was "tepid", characterised by "greed and empty cleverness" and in need of realising that "no one is free of guilt, no one may exclude himself from it" (114). Buber considered that a true Jewish response would be impaired if consolation was sought through considering themselves less sinful than the Germans, or if they indulged in self-justification or self-pity. What was happening in Germany was outside Jewish control and a right response was by way of concentrating on what could be controlled, namely the quality of individual spirituality and thus the renewal of true community among themselves. Despite the prophetic passion Buber brought to this appeal, it must have sounded a harsh note to his audiences.

only a man with Buber's passionate involvement in the

'prophetic faith' could have had the courage to urge his people to confession at a time like that; a time when most religious leaders compare the virtue of their own people to the sins of the oppressors (115).

In face of these kinds of declarations there must have been many Jews in Germany who found Buber's word too hard. Those Jews who eventually heard his voice again in Palestine in 1938, would also have been confused to hear him vehemently taking up the cause of Zionist politics in his reply to Gandhi's criticism of Jewish demands for a homeland (116). The essential difference of opinion between Buber and Gandhi concerned the latter's comments on the Zionist principle of establishing a Jewish homeland as against accepting as their home the land of their birth. He reminds Gandhi that just because of his own experience in South Africa he should have remembered that behind the Indian community there was always the "great Mother India" from which the alien community drew courage and strength (117).

Buber's willingness to take up the argument with Gandhi on behalf of the Ha'ol, a group of Zionist intellectual (118), suggests a certain ambivalence of attitude. Having withdrawn from the processes where such responses might have been made through formal diplomatic means, Buber confines himself to personal correspondence. It is interesting to note that the content of Buber's reply while resting on a more characteristic ground of historical and biblical authority, does not at all avoid the hardest political implications of Jewish settlement in an Arab occupied country. I suggest the implication of this, is that Buber had realised from his German experience how powerful an intellectual lobby can be. The role of an intellectual and moral agent provocateur was well suited both to his style and to the individualistic stand he took in relation to Judaism and left him free to take up such causes as concerned him in whatever way he chose.

This is well illustrated by his decision to accept the Hanseatic Peace Prize and the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, and by his plea for clemency in the judgement of Eichmann. Both these events also

illustrate the extent to which Buber's uncompromising adherence to principle isolated him from even the minorities with which he was associated.

In 1951 Buber was awarded the Hanseatic Goethe Prize of the University of Hamburg. This was before the Reparations Agreement and anti-German feelings in Israel were at their highest; his decision to accept the prize inevitably deeply offended Jewish public opinion throughout the world and especially in Israel. In response to the controversy Buber explained that he accepted the prize in order to strengthen the pro-human circle in Germany in its fight to make a come-back against the anti-human; to reject the prize would have played into the hands of the old enemy. In 1953, he accepted the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade and the controversy was renewed on the same terms.

Most of the opposition to Buber which came from a wide and representative circle of Israeli society was probably due more to the fact that the wounds were still too fresh, than to any policy of a conscious rejection of acts of reconciliation. Buber endeavoured to maintain exactly those distinctions he laid down years earlier between the rulers of Germany and the populace and by means of such distinctions he held a vision of the renewal of German society through German youth (119). These distinctions were too fine for Jewish public opinion to accommodate, and a vision of German renewal could have no part in the consciousness of an Israel fighting for its own survival as a nation. It can thus be concluded that so far as Buber's acceptance of the prize was concerned, it was simply too soon for Jewish opinion to understand the positive aspect of such a conciliatory act.

His response to the trial of Eichmann presents problems of a different kind. It was an issue of international concern and as such ranged far beyond the internal affairs of Israel. There were two

issues on which Buber took a stand which isolated him even further from Israeli sympathies in general and from his own circle of friends in Jerusalem. One concerned the nature of the trial itself, the other his opposition to the death penalty.

The trial itself concerned a simple matter of principle; Buber strongly believed, in company with considerable international opinion, that the Israeli government should have formed an international court and not to do so was to risk the real possibility that Eichmann would not get a fair trial (120). Buber was opposed in principle to the death penalty and had always been so, but he believed its application to Eichmann was meaningless since the concept of punishment could not be applied to the kind of crimes he had committed (120). Although Buber's appeal to Ben-Gurion for clemency was unsuccessful, it is essential to understand that Buber's motives had nothing to do with feelings of compassion; Buber felt only distaste and horror for Eichmann, and hated him both for himself and as a symbol of everything against which he had staked his life (122).

Buber faced severe criticism of his attitude towards the Eichmann sentence; typical was that of Shmuel Katz, a former officer in the Irgun Zvai Leumi (123):

When a man who is famous throughout the world as a philosopher exerts the moral influence attached to his name in order to save Eichmann's life, we are entitled and indeed duty-bound to examine his right to request us to accede to his plea. And we must ask where was the shock, the outcry, the use of his famous name, when in the past, in his immediate environment, in this country, people were being judged and hanged? (124).

Katz was making the hard point that Buber did less to save Irgun members sentenced to death by the British than he was now doing to save Eichmann. Then, Buber merely signed petitions to the British High Commissioner asking for the sentences to be commuted to life imprisonment; then Buber followed the initiatives taken by others, while now, in the case of Eichmann, the initiative was entirely his.

Eichmann was hanged on 31 May 1962 and a few days later Buber gave an interview to the New York Times, in which he stated his belief that the execution was a mistake of historical dimension, having nothing to do with either mitigation or the penalty of death.

People are mistaken in thinking that I opposed this simply as a consequence of my opposition to the death penalty. For such crimes there is no penalty. I would not have dared to do what I have done if I had to think only about the crimes as such (125).

What then did Buber think about if not of the crimes themselves? I suggest that for Buber the problem resided in a stage further back than the committing of the crimes, and that was the stage of the envisaging of them, their conception in human imagination. The only hope for redemption, that is, not necessarily only of the man but of the evil perpetrated by him, lay in the possibility of his continued life. Execution was not just an admittance of human failure, but an acknowledgement of a failure of far greater dimensions in spiritual terms.

It is useful to conclude this section by reference to a conversation between Buber and Hodes, in which the latter reminded Buber of his having written in I and Thou, "Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou".

Hodes asks, "But isn't it virtually impossible to love all men?"

Buber replied:

You know even Jesus, (he used the Hebrew expression Yeshu Ha'notzri - Jesus of Nazareth), didn't love all men. Look at the Pharisees. To understand is not always to love. Think of Hitler! Of Eichmann! Yes, I love many men to whom I am opposed. But not Eichmann! Perhaps I can understand him. But to love him - no, that I cannot do! (126).

I will consider in my conclusions the implications of the spiritual failure referred to above and I will argue that in respect both of that and Buber's acknowledgement of the relative nature of human love, that there are important questions to be asked concerning his dialogical philosophy.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 8.

1. Buber, Preface, On Judaism, p3.
2. ibid. pp3-4.
3. ibid. p8.
4. ibid.
5. ibid. p9.
6. ibid. p273.
7. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I, p147.
8. Simon, "Martin Buber and German Jewry", Leo Baeck Institute Year Book III p33.
9. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol. I p204.
10. Friedman, I feel, "protests too much" in an attempt to vindicate Buber. So far as the question of influence is concerned he uses the phrase, "symbolic significance," referring presumably to the emergence of Rosenzweig's thought at the same time as that of Buber's. See op. cit. p205. In an extensive note to the sources for this chapter Friedman quotes a letter received from Buber in reply to his enquiry about the matter of Rosenzweig's "Atheistic Theology," influencing a decisive change in Buber's philosophy: Buber writes: "I have been influenced decisively not by men but by events," Buber wrote, "particularly in the years 1916-1919. See op. cit. pp398-400.  
As to the stranger question of the rejection of the essay, Friedman records, Buber explained to him that the projected almanac was to be edited in Prague by Hans Kohn, Robert Weltsch and the Bar Kochba Society and that he, Buber, was only an honorary editor based in Berlin and had not even read Rosenzweig's essay. Friedman further suggests that if Rosenzweig had sent the essay to the Prague editors they might well have returned it without showing it to Buber precisely because it was critical of the Three Speeches on Judaism. All that can be conjectured from this evidence is that the Prague editors closed ranks on Buber's behalf. They would have had no need to do so for Buber was by no means shy of criticism and opposition played out on the public stage, as we have already demonstrated. Indeed on these and other issues, he was vehemently involved in a bizarre debate with an anonymous critic who had suggested that Buber's unacknowledged source for the Speeches was the German-Jewish philosopher Constantin Brunner.  
Ernst Simon records that, whatever the reality of the situation, Rosenzweig was not at all troubled, "conscious as I was of the path I would take, I realised myself that everything that I might have said at that time was very immature." See Simon op. cit. p33. But Simon does go on to say that the essay was not only "the most bitter disputation concerning the Reden über das Judentum" which had ever been expressed and suppressed at the same time." For the suggestion of suppression he provides no authority and presumably is making an assumption that Buber had in fact seen the essay.
1. Buber, "Judaism and the Jews," On Judaism, p11.
2. ibid. p12.

13. Buber, "Jewish Religiosity," op.cit. p80.
14. ibid.
15. Buber, "Judaism and the Jews," op.cit. p12.
16. Buber, "Herut: On Youth and Religion," p149.
17. ibid. p152.
18. ibid. p152-164.
19. ibid. p164.
20. ibid. pp164-165.
21. ibid. pp168-169.
22. Kaplan, "Buber's Evaluation of Philosophic Thought and Religious Tradition," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p255.
23. Buber, "Teaching and Deed," Israel and the World, p143-144.
24. ibid. p147. My emphasis.
25. Buber, "On National Education," op.cit. pp158-159.
26. Haberman, "Martin Buber and Reform Judaism," European Jewry, p25.
27. Buber, "Replies to my Critics," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p744.
28. ibid.
29. Buber, "Religion and Modern Thinking," Eclipse of God, p104f.
30. Buber, Ich und Du, p115f.
31. Simon, op.cit. p34.
32. ibid.
33. ibid.
34. Berkovits, Major Themes in Modern Philosophies of Judaism, p143.
35. Buber, "The Holy Way," On Judaism p137.
36. Rosenzweig, On Jewish Learning, p75f.
37. Friedman, op. cit. Vol.II, p44.
38. ibid. p45.
39. Diamond, Martin Buber, pp12-13.
40. Marcion: c.144 A.D. A Christian who maintained that Christianity was a completely new revelation and had nothing to do with the Old Testament.
41. Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible," Israel and the

- World, p96.
42. *ibid.* pp89-102.
  43. *ibid.* p91.
  44. *ibid.* p93-94.
  45. *ibid.* p96.
  46. *ibid.* p94.
  47. *ibid.* p95-97.
  48. *ibid.* p98.
  49. Kaufmann, Walter, "Introduction," to his translation of Buber's Ich und Du, p19.
  50. Glatzer, "Editor's Postscript," Biblical Humanism, p240.
  51. Buber, "The Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth," On Judaism, p218.
  52. Buber, "Men of Today and the Jewish Bible," Israel and the World, p92.
  53. *ibid.*
  54. *ibid.* p94.
  55. Brod, "Judaism and Christianity in the Work of Martin Buber," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p324.
  56. Buber, "Judaism and Mankind," On Judaism, p23-24.
  57. *ibid.* p26.
  58. *ibid.*
  59. *ibid.* p25.
  60. *ibid.* p27.
  61. *ibid.* p28
  62. *ibid.* p29.
  63. *ibid.* p29-30.
  64. *ibid.*
  65. Buber, "The Renewal of Judaism," On Judaism, p42.
  66. *ibid.*
  67. *ibid.* p43.
  68. Buber, "In the Midst of History," Israel and the World, p79.
  69. Buber, "Judaism and Civilisation," On Judaism, pp191-192.
  70. *ibid.*



71. Buber, "Imitatio Dei," Israel and the World, p71.
72. Buber, op.cit. p66, and cf. Wheelwright, "Buber's Philosophical Anthropology," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p89.
73. Buber, "In the Midst of History", Israel and the World, p79.
74. Buber, "What is Man?" Between Man and Man, p224.
75. Buber, "Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth," On Judaism, p221.
76. Isaiah 8:17.
77. Buber, "Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth", On Judaism, p223.
78. ibid. p224.
79. ibid. p224-225.
80. op.cit. Preface p9.
81. Buber, Two Types of Faith, p26, and pp170-174.
82. Buber, Moses, p90.
83. See for example, Buber's discussion op. cit. pp170-174, and Brod op.cit. p326f.
84. Buber, "The Land and Its Possessors," Israel and the World p229.
85. Mendes-Flohr, "Buber and Post-Traditional Judaism," European Jewry pp5-6.
86. Buber, "Herut: On Youth and Religion," On Judaism, p154.
87. Buber, "A Letter to Ghandi," A Land of Two Peoples, p119.
88. Buber, "Dialogue," Between Man and Man, p22.
89. Buber, "The Silent Question," On Judaism, p214.
90. Buber, "The Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth," op.cit. p217.
91. Buber, Moses, pp101-105, and pp110-118.
92. Buber, The Prophetic Faith, pp19-23.
93. Buber, "The Holy Way," On Judaism, p116.
94. ibid. pp128-129.
95. ibid. pp138-139.
96. ibid. pp144.
97. ibid. pp145-146.
98. Buber, "Judaism and the Jews," On Judaism, pp15-16.
99. ibid.

100. *ibid.* p17.
101. *ibid.* p19.
102. *ibid.* p17.
103. Simon, *op.cit* p7.
104. Rosenzweig and Strauss, Eds. Festgabe für Martin Buber: Aus unbekannten Schriften.
105. See the discussion by Vermes, Buber on God and the Perfect Man, pp24-26.
106. Buber, "Kampf und Israel," Reden und Schriften, p32.
107. Simon, *op. cit.*, quoting Landauer's "Thought of a Heretic," in Vom Judentum, p7.
108. Simon, *op. cit.* pp7-8.
109. *ibid.* p21.
110. *ibid.* p15.
111. *ibid.*
112. See for example, Buber, "The Question to the Single One," Between Man and Man, p40f., and "The Power of the Spirit," Israel and the World, p173f. At first Buber's criticisms were not understood by the Nazi members of his audience, but after these addresses in 1934, he was prohibited from speaking in public and in closed sessions of Jewish organisations.
113. Buber, "Die Stunde und die Erkenntnis," Reden und Aufsätze, pp18f.
114. Buber, "Gericht und Erneuerung," *op. cit.*, p25.
115. Diamond, Martin Buber, p209.
116. Buber addressed his reply to an article Gandhi published in his weekly paper, Harijan, on 26th. November 1938, entitled "The Jews". Gandhi questions almost every aspect of the Zionist cause, from the original Mandates to the movement for settlement in Palestine. He argued that Jews were fortunate in already being able to assume a home in the countries in which they lived and questioned the morality of what seemed to him to be a demand for two homes. He suggested to those Jews already settled in Palestine that the biblical notion of land was intended to be an ideal of the heart, but even so, if it has to take a physical form, they wrong so take possession of an already occupied country under the protection of British guns. Nevertheless Gandhi expressed his regret at the Arab use of violence. See: Mohandas K. Gandhi "The Jews", A Land of Two Peoples, edited by Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, p107f.
117. Buber's reply, "A Letter to Gandhi" A Land of Two Peoples, pp113f. There was no further correspondence. Mendes-Flohr notes the possibility that Gandhi was not at the ashram and did not receive the letters forwarded to him. His source is Gideon Shimoni's book, Gandhi, Satyagraha and the Jews, in which he indicates that it was Gandhi's habit always to answer letters of

this kind. Editor's note 4, p113.

118. Ha'ol, "Yoke" of the Kingdom of God: The group took its name from the rabbinic Midrash, Sifre Deuteronomy 32:29, "Take upon yourselves the Yoke of the Kingdom of God, and act toward one another in loving kindness.
119. Buber, "Genuine Dialogue and the Possibilities of Peace", Pointing the Way, p233. This essay was based on the address Buber gave on the occasion of the award to him of the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade at Frankfurt-am-Main, in Paulskirche, September 27th., 1953. He had earlier accepted the Hanseatic Goethe Prize from the University of Hamburg.
120. Hodes, Encounter with Martin Buber, p128.
121. *ibid.* pp128-29.
122. *ibid.* p130.
123. The right wing underground group which fought against the British mandatory occupation of Palestine.
124. Haaretz, February 1962.
125. Hodes, *op. cit.* p133.
126. *ibid.* p130.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS.

Several of the themes running through the previous chapters have to be held together in order to understand clearly the basic concerns of Buber's thought, his perception of Judaism and his self-perception contingent on this. Thus in formulating my conclusions, my intentions in this final chapter are as follows:

I will consider the implications of the influence on Buber of Feuerbach and Dilthey inasmuch as I believe these influences to have been neglected. I will try and show that taking these influences into consideration provides an insight into Buber's philosophical anthropology that in some respects adds to those so far offered.

I shall isolate two dominant ideas of Buber's dialogical philosophy important for the purpose of my thesis, the first concerns the twofold attitudes represented by Buber's primary word-pairs, and the second has to do with the almost exclusive emphasis he places on the efficacy of relationship. I want to suggest that the present state of Buber scholarship has not given sufficient weight to the implications of Buber's use of the term attitude particularly with respect to the dualistic formulation in which the basic attitudes are expressed, and I shall be concerned to try and redress that balance in my conclusions below. Further to this, Buber's concept of relationship, while obviously determined to some extent by the attitudes brought to them, suggest certain problems which have not so far received full attention. I consider this to be true in two ways. Firstly, it has always been assumed that Buber's claim to go beyond experience can be upheld; I will question this assumption and establish the implications of my doing so. Secondly, it has also been assumed that Buber finally severed a previous mystical orientation. I will suggest that this, in fact, was never successfully achieved and that therefore a mystical aspect remains within his basic attitudes which in turn has important implications for each of those spheres in

which Buber understands our relationships to be worked out. These implications are also relevant to conclusions to be drawn on the nature of Buber's existentialism, since there is a tension between this and his retention of a mystical orientation, however refined this might be.

Turning to the more outward and practical aspect of Buber's thought and his characteristic emphasis on choice and action, I will question his claim and the support it has found, that his moral philosophy is free from an imperative as understood in Kantian terms. I will argue that in this respect at least, Buber retains a Kantian debt and that we can find in Buber's thinking that sense of obligation which he claimed to have abandoned in favour of what is vaguely referred to as "the dialogical." I will also argue that this retention of a moral oughtness in no way diminishes the sense of value brought by the individual to the "Thou" encountered, but that such a sense of value does itself engender a response of obligation. I will therefore show that obligation need not be understood as pejorative and can be read as a positive and necessary response. I will then turn to a particular aspect of Buber's ethics which concerns the problem of radical evil and the implication of spiritual failure. I shall end my conclusions with some general observation; these will include a consideration of the extent to which Buber's ideas are workable in terms of the daily and ultimate needs of the individual. Since Buber's thought revolves around what can be realised existentially, I consider this to be a question of central importance and one to have been neglected. For the sake of clarity, I present my conclusions under the following headings: i) Feuerbach, Dilthey and Buber's Philosophical Anthropology. ii) The basic dialogical attitudes. iii) The concept of experience. iv) Buber's mystical orientation. v) Morality, obligation and radical evil. vi) General conclusions.

Each of the above sections should be read as contributing to Buber's Jewish self-definition and where the link is not apparent I will make the necessary reference and explain its application. Section vi, will be concerned with further observations not relevant to the other sections.

#### i) Feuerbach, Dilthey and Buber's Philosophical Anthropology.

My discussion of Feuerbach in Chapter 3 suggested an influence on Buber which has not thus far received the attention it deserves. Writers have been satisfied to comment on Buber's own acknowledgement of the impetus he received from Feuerbach, and on his criticisms of Feuerbach. Apart from the acknowledged influence, I believe that there exists a wider influence arising out of Feuerbach's concept of, for example, a philosophy of the concrete, the nature of religious language and most fundamentally, his concept of dialogue.

The impetus Buber derived in his youth from Feuerbach's "I-Thou" formula remains to be found in Buber's mature philosophy which takes its tone from the concerns indicated above. The earlier "impetus", however, provides a more positive influence whereas others I have discussed suggest a negative influence in the sense that Buber's philosophical anthropology developed in part, as a reaction to what he understood as Feuerbach's shortcomings.

I have questioned Buber's criticism of Feuerbach's failing to ask the fundamental question "what is man?", by pointing out that while the question is not put in precisely this way, (that is in Kant's form), the concerns implied by it are clearly present in, and important to his thought. I have also suggested that Buber is therefore wrong in concluding that Feuerbach's philosophical anthropology is made invalid by this specific omission.

These criticisms of Feuerbach reflect in themselves the direction

Buber endeavoured to take in his own thought, that is to place man unequivocally at the centre of his concern. A more specific criticism was the assertion that Feuerbach's man was unproblematic, whereas for Buber the problematic begins with man; thus Buber's emphasis is on the problematic individual, whereas for Feuerbach the problematic is concentrated on society, and social organisation is understood to be the root of man's problems. It is this difference and Buber's endeavour to make problematic man the centre of his philosophical anthropology, that marks the key shift from Feuerbach. Thus it was, that Buber's development of a dialogical philosophy set out to define the nature of the problems which "begin" with man and possible solutions to them.

We can accept then, that Buber's placing of man at the centre of his philosophy was due in no small part to Feuerbach's own dialogical formulation. It can be further conclude that Buber's understanding of the problematic nature of man is a radical adjustment of Feuerbach. Man's problematic nature set at the centre of Buber's philosophical anthropology and the directions man must take in seeking a solution to those problems, has received a full treatment in the preceding chapters and will be focused in the conclusions to be offered below.

In considering the possibility of certain parallels in the thinking of Feuerbach and Buber, it seems right to start at that point where Buber acknowledges an influence. As I have mentioned, the word Buber used was not "influence" but "impetus" and this he associated with his youth. "Impetus" implies only a vague energy in a general direction; I submit that "influence" is an appropriate description of what happened and that this was not confined to Buber's youth.

The acknowledged starting point was Feuerbach's emphasis on a wholly real difference between I and Thou. This difference implies a genuine individualism which sets itself against the kind of collectivism which interested, for example, Marx. For Feuerbach unity

between man and man is possible despite the differences. Buber follows this idea exactly but places more emphasis on the significance of the differences in terms of the tension between distance and relation and thus demonstrates his need to create the concept of the category of "between." This category was addressed precisely to ease the tension between distance and relation but it appears, that despite his attempts to guard against it, Buber psychologises the inter-dependence of the subject-object relationship. Individuality becomes confused with self-will and self-consciousness, and he attempts to hold a distinction between the idea of "person" and "individual" in which a heightened sense of individuality can "sink the I into unreality" (1). I was concerned with developing this idea in Chapter 7.

Comparison with Feuerbach on this point exposes what I submit is a serious inadequacy in Buber's thought. By stating that the individual does not have in himself the "essence" of man's being but that this is contained in community, Feuerbach indicates the importance of collective agreement. That is, the content and behaviour of the individual is all the time moderated by the needs and standards of the community; the correctness of private life finds its validation in the public consensus. Feuerbach calls on Kant's illustration: an idea of a hundred dollars exists only for me; but the dollars in the hand exist also for others in that they are corroborated by the senses of the others (2). Buber is unable to give to community this kind of corroborative or validating authority. What is right and what is real remains for Buber entirely a matter for individual responsibility, it resides with the I and thus remains subjective. Nevertheless, when Buber speaks of mutuality and the need for the I and the Thou to confirm each other, we hear an echo of Feuerbach's "that which I alone perceive I doubt; only that which the other also perceives is certain" (3). It is a fine distinction to suggest that in fact, Feuerbach does not deny essence to individual being but argues that



this essence is only to be found in community. Similarly, it is a fine distinction for Buber to argue that the essence of being residing in the individual only finds its realisation in relationship. Thus, I argue, that Buber's I is just as dependent on the society of two as is Feuerbach's I on the notion of community and that Buber's warnings about aspects of false or over-heightened individualism is a masked acknowledgement of precisely this dependence. There is an important implication of this argument for Buber's attitude to Law, which regardless of whether or not this has its origin in revelation, is a formal expression of precisely that public consensus the authority of which Buber cannot accept. I shall be concerned with this subject in my conclusions in section v) below.

Further, I want to suggest that Feuerbach's thesis concerning the cryptic nature of religious language is suggestive of Buber's understanding of the function of myth. To recapitulate briefly: Feuerbach argues that both theological and philosophical language are evidences of forms of human self-alienation. That is, for reasons not disclosed, man seems reluctant to address himself directly and all he endeavours to establish of God and the concerns of religion are in fact discussions of aspects of both his individual and collective nature and aspirations. To this must be added Feuerbach's notion of "mystification" and the role he ascribes to "imagination." In one sense his notion of mystification is his way of avoiding asking the question about man's need to abstract his own nature by means of theological and philosophical language. It is a pity Feuerbach did not attempt to explain why he thought man has this need, for it is important. Nevertheless, as I have indicated in Chapter 3, his thesis centres round the assumption of this need and his method is to de-mystify the language so as to expose its real subject, man. While Feuerbach does not explain the function of man's technique of mystification, he does explain the function of imagination which sometimes he uses in

conjunction with the notion of "fancy" (4). The function of imagination is to precede perception, thus, "immediate, sensuous perception comes much later than the imagination and the fantasy" (5). The imagining function is used therefore to provide man with conceptions of objects he cannot at first perceive, it thus also precedes reason. Thus, for example,

God is conceived by ordinary theology or theism by means of the imagination as a being distinct from and independent of reason (6).

It is therefore the task and "historical significance" of speculative philosophy to bridge the imagining-reasoning gap, and thus establish the divine as the being of reason.

I suggest that Buber's understanding of myth and of primitive language was stimulated by these notions of Feuerbach's. Buber adopts Plato's definition of myth as a narrative of a divine event described as corporeal reality (7). What is significant is that it is the function of myth to present as corporeally real what is perceived as a divine or absolute event. It seems then, that where Feuerbach uses the notion of imagination, Buber uses the notion of myth, since it is the function of both to provide or describe conceptions which man cannot otherwise perceive. So far, however, Buber allows myth only a descriptive authority, that is the event is assumed as corporeally real simply because it is described as being so. But for Buber, more than description is required, even as with Feuerbach the matter cannot be left entirely to imagination. Thus, where Feuerbach calls on perception and reason to make real what is imagined, Buber calls on "a heightened awareness of the non-rational aspect of the experience" (8). Buber penetrates somewhat further than Feuerbach in attempting to explain man's need to resort to the imagining or myth-making function. Feuerbach sees imagination as a faculty equipped to fill the gaps in human knowledge. Both seem in accord in terms of understanding that the source of all religious imagination can be understood in terms of

man's ignorance and his struggles to interpret his situation in, and relationship with, nature.

Buber understands myth to have an origin of a totally different order. In place of human ignorance he puts primitive man's lack of "the necessary empiricism and sense of purpose" to manage and to understand certain kinds of experience (9). In fact ignorance and a lack of empiricism may not be all that far apart especially if both are seen as misunderstanding, or not understanding causal functions. Nevertheless, Buber argues that even modern man preserves the myth-making function, not because of a need to explain the otherwise inexplicable but because myth as a way of approach, as a technique, reveals a truth which is fuller and more complete than is perceived within the framework of causal necessity.

This aspect of my discussion is also relevant to Feuerbach's thesis concerning the cryptic nature of religious language. Bound up with the whole of this discussion is the more general question of the role of language in communication and both men share a suspicion of language in its theological and philosophical functions. For Buber language is the child of relationship; in the case of primitive man, it is born of the need for immediate, unpremeditated response both to his environment and his place in the natural world and to other people. In modern man, however, the responsive immediacy of language has become blunted by being formalised and ritualised out of the specifically relational situation (10). Feuerbach also lays specific claims on relationship for language; ideas arise only in communication and conversation between man and man, "not alone, but only with others, does one reach notions and reason in general" (11).

I suggest that a further consequence of Feuerbach's influence is reflected in Buber's placing the imagination at the centre of man's faculties and that this has important specific implications for his concept of good and evil. My conclusions on this theme are to be found

in section v. below.

My discussion in Chapter 3 concerning individuation and Jung indicated that Buber seems to have remained remarkably close to Dilthey's notion of wholeness and its associated concept of unity. If a shift has taken place it involves an attempt to de-psychologise the notion of self as being unique and independent. There is, however, another and related parallel which makes my case stronger and it is this latter concept of independence which provides the link. For both Dilthey and Buber the idea of independence is qualified. Dilthey's thought establishes an indispensable link between self-knowledge and knowledge of the other. It is in this more precise context that we can follow Dilthey's attempt to take that step beyond erlebnis; it is a step which takes us from our own lived experience to an understanding of the lived experience of the other. This understanding concerns,

mental attitudes (Stellungen) which lie deeper than the surface series of psychological events, and controls it in the interests of wider purposes (12).

This "wider purpose" is exactly the knowledge of others referred to above. Self-understanding, therefore, is for Dilthey fundamental to the understanding of others.

The parallel in Buber becomes more obvious. In Buber's thought independence is associated with the dangers of that false sense of individualism which leads rather to a form of isolation, the kind against which Buber warns in his essay on Kierkegaard (13). As established in my previous discussion in Chapter 3, Buber resists the psychological implications of Dilthey's notion of interdependence, preferring to give it an ontic weight which places the relational flow between individuals firmly in the context of being; that is for Buber, knowledge of the other resides and remains conditional on the subject maintaining his subjectivity. Buber does not use the word "understanding", instead he asserts that the individual can only know the wholeness of the other out of a knowledge of his own wholeness

(14). The implications of these observations for Buber's dialogical philosophy were developed in Chapters 7 and 8, and my conclusions on Buber's response to the concept of experience are given in section iii.

There is an other area in which I want to suggest Buber shows a marked influence from his teacher. This concerns the specific principles by which the individual can understand and interpret texts, and the general principles by which the individual seeks to understand and interpret history. In terms of the former being historical primary source material, the two are obviously connected. What we are now concerned with is what Kepnes calls "the effect on Buber of the romantic hermeneutical school of Schleiermacher and Dilthey" which he also considers "has not been adequately explored" (15). Historical documents and data from any source can provide the individual with the opportunity of reliving the spiritual activity which originally produces them. Without this infusion of new life the material simply remains a dead record. What Dilthey seems to claim is that genuine historical knowledge, (indeed genuine knowledge of any kind) becomes a genuine experience of its own object.

At this point I can indicate the extent of the importance of these ideas to Buber. In Chapter 5, I argued that it is precisely on these principles that Buber approached the Hasidic texts believing that in the process of interpretation he could revitalise the energy of that movement for the purposes of the renewal of German Judaism. In the process of this, it can be argued that what Buber considered to be the Hasidic ideal historically became for him a genuine lived experience to be realised in the present. Further to this, it can be concluded that Buber brought exactly the same attitude and expectation to his understanding and interpretation of Jewish textual sources generally, and to biblical religion in particular.

Returning to Dilthey, it should be noticed that the principle of

making the object of historical knowledge a present and genuine experience, contains a problem, namely that of the tension of historical distance and immediate experience. Buber could not share the extent to which Dilthey recourses to psychology to resolve this problem in terms of his own personality being enlarged by its absorption of the experience(s) of others who lived in the past (16). In fact it is not a problem of which Buber seems to be over-concerned. In terms of individual relationships, the notion of distance figures large (17). Historical distance is something Buber accommodates to his idea of a (Jewish) continuum, of a sense of (Jewish) inheritance and the concept of historical memory. It is these ever living and ever accessible energies which carry to the individual a message to be realised in his own present experience (18).

We can summarise the above thus: I submit that Buber took from Dilthey and applied to his interpretation of Jewish Biblical religion, of Jewish history generally, and specifically to his interpretation of Hasidism, significant hermeneutic principles. These require the historian to transcend the limits of mere data as phenomena (begreifen), to the point of reliving (and re-communicating) the original experience(s) they were intended to record. When this happens, when historical record becomes the immediate lived experience of the historian, historical knowledge becomes self-knowledge. Thus the past event, (history) can itself, by means of texts, become a Thou to be encountered by the individual.

I would suggest that we can understand the relationship between Dilthey and Buber's thought by considering that Dilthey was concerned to understand the whole drama of life, while Buber was more concerned to understand the individual actor and his relationships to other actors, whether of the past or who happen to be on the stage at the same time. But Buber's understanding of the particular role of the individual, is I submit, conditioned in the important ways outlined

above by Dilthey's Weltanschauungen, in which hermeneutics forms only a part. Dilthey was concerned to proceed from the analysis of the ways in which ordinary life becomes meaningful to the interpretation of that meaning (19). Buber in being concerned primarily with the individual-self and the self in relationship focused his own Weltanschauungen entirely in his dialogical philosophy which I suggest that despite its invaluable contribution to philosophical anthropology, was never developed into the kind of full and satisfying system as is represented by Dilthey.

I have pointed out that Buber required that philosophical anthropology embrace a comprehensive curriculum which should concern itself with the general concept of the human species as such, and in consideration of its difference from other animal species, of its unique place in nature. At the same time it should address the problematic of the individual and the individual's place in community.

From the preceding account of the influences on Buber of Feuerbach and Dilthey, it is possible to make certain observations concerning Buber's philosophical anthropology. I suggest that Buber never satisfactorily accommodated to his philosophy Feuerbach's placement of the human problematic in the context of society rather than in the individual. In the various contexts of the preceding chapters I have suggested that while the central emphasis of Buber's philosophy rests in the notion of man's wholeness, and the implications of this for the concept of unity, the notion of wholeness does not carry over easily to the matter of community. The place of the individual in community seems confused in Buber's thinking because of finely drawn lines touching on the nature of religious and national identity and the conflict of loyalties this sometimes involves. Thus we can see that Buber is able to address himself, for example, to the problem of Jewish identity in terms of birth and blood, in terms of nationality and politics and in terms of Covenant and tradition. He seems,

however, unable to address himself to the collective self-awareness of Jewish people and Jewish communities in their dialogue with other communities except in political and social terms.

To the problems this implies for Jewish community, and to possible solutions to them, Buber was always committed (see section v. below). But I suggest, that he never satisfactorily developed a philosophy of community, in the way in which he developed a philosophy of the individual. There is no sense in which a philosophical anthropology must necessarily confine itself solely to the individual. Buber's philosophical anthropology while being centred on the problematic of man, does not easily accommodate the collective problematic of man in society. One of the reasons for this might be found in his inability to understand, as did Feuerbach, that there are important problems, such as the persecution of minorities as a political policy, which manifest themselves only in terms of collective, rather than individual relationships. In Buber's dialogic, there is no transference possible from the I-Thou, to the I-We, and thence to the plural application of both subject and object. His rigorous insistence on placing the problematic solely within the province of the individual precludes a philosophical application of that dialogic to corporate manifestations of the problematic.

Another reason for this might be found in the fact that Buber adopted Dilthey's emphasis on self-understanding, that is on a clear and comprehensive sense of the content the individual brings to the "I" he carries into relationship. Further to this, Buber adjusted Dilthey's notion of interdependence to that of knowledge being dependent on the maintenance of subjectivity, and a sense of the individual's own wholeness being the condition of his understanding of and relationship to, the wholeness of the other. Buber's philosophical anthropology is consequently not just centred on problematic man, but on an intensely conceived individualism. The



problems this poses for Judaism are obvious and I suggest that they are precisely pointed, both by the weight placed on the notion of self-understanding derived from Dilthey, and also by Buber's inability to accommodate in a Jewish context the authority Feuerbach gives to community, which requires the correctness of private life finding validation in the public consensus.

It is from these sources then, that I suggest that the characteristic subjective and uncompromising individualism of Buber's philosophical anthropology is derived. I have also to conclude, that it is unfortunate that Buber felt unable to present a more balanced philosophical anthropology. That he could not, is due to a considerable degree to the fact that his curriculum for a philosophical anthropology, while being comprehensive, did not draw on the range of disciplines and perceptions characteristic of Feuerbach and Dilthey. The concepts of wholeness and unity as ideals can also be applied to areas of knowledge. Fiercely protecting a philosophy or method of enquiry against what are considered to be extraneous and distracting influences not does not of itself result in a unified perception. The way of exclusion leads not to a satisfying synthesis, but to a hardening of the edges between disciplines which might otherwise enrich one another. I am arguing that what is true of Buber's attempt at philosophical purity achieved by exercising a kind of academic protectionism, is also true of his efforts to safeguard a refined concept of "happening" or "event" against what he considers to be the confusing and distracting associations of both "experience" and "mysticism." I shall be concerned with each of these themes in subsequent sections.

#### 1) The Basic Dialogical Attitudes.

Buber's dialogical philosophy revolves around the basic word-pairs, "I-Thou" and "I-It", which he describes as the twofold

attitudes man brings to the world. Buber scholarship is naturally concerned with an analysis and criticism of the relational implications of these locutions which are regarded as a key to an interpretation of his thought. I want to make certain observations, firstly about the notion of attitude as such, and then concerning the implication that these attitudes are twofold.

I consider that insufficient consideration has been given to the fact that Buber understood the locutions to be representations of attitudes. That is, the locutions have been taken as statements concerning a fixed disposition of man towards the world, whereas I submit that Buber's understanding is more fluid than this. Buber does, in fact, explain that man will move from one attitude to the other, that it is man's "melancholy fate" that each Thou might become an It, and that the potential exists for each It to become a Thou. This ever present fluctuation in man's disposition to the world and the implication of this to Buber's use of the term "attitude" is, I suggest, more important for an understanding of Buber's concept of the nature of man, than has thus far been recognised.

We have to keep in mind that Buber studied psychology and worked in clinics while still a student, in clinics; this we have to balance against his frequent warnings concerning the dangers of psychologising experience. To this specific matrix I believe we can add another significant element and that is the notion derived from Kant by way of Hermann Cohen that there exists in man a priori categories which determine the way man reads the world. I am not about to qualify my arguments in Chapter 3, which are intended to establish Buber's significant shift from Kant. I am suggesting that what Buber retained as the idea of inherent dispositions, the content of which and function of which were of his own devising, and that in the locutions under discussion we have a highly concentrated expression of them.

I am suggesting that the emphasis of analyses of Buber to date

have been concerned with the operational aspects of relationship to the neglect of theoretical examination of the attitudes determining their nature. I therefore consider it to be necessary to consider what an "attitude" might have meant to Buber. I have already used the word "disposition", which suggests an inherent inclination towards reading the world in a particular way. To this I would add, that to the extent to which it is fixed, or settled, Buber understood that attitude will determine both opinion and behaviour. It also determines what he will see and hear. I suggest therefore, that Buber understands that it is man's attitudes which help him to bring meaning to the world, and to order what would otherwise be chaotic and ambiguous. It is this function of attitude that for Buber has the weight of a Kantian category and it is possible to read his adolescent crisis concerning space and time as a radical alteration in attitude in the sense that he was no longer disposed to understand the world on his previous terms.

The distinction I am endeavouring to make is that the vein of Buber scholarship has concentrated on the relational implications of the basic word-pairs to the neglect of an examination of that condition of man which originally gave rise to the attitudes. What Buber states in terms of these twofold attitudes has always been accepted as the starting point of an analysis of his dialogical philosophy. It has never been asked, (not even by Buber), as to where these attitudes have their origin.

I suggest that this question exposes a further subject neglected by Buber's commentators and that which is his understanding of creation and the myth of the "fall" of man. It is beyond the terms of reference of this thesis to make a detailed examination of these themes, but I have made a suggestion in Chapter 8 to the effect that a clue to Buber's understanding of them is contained in exactly the subject under discussion. The matter involves Buber's description of

the twofold nature of the attitudes and the problems this contains for his concern for unity. I suggested that in the formulation of the twofold nature of the attitudes underlying his primary word-pairs. Buber was describing man's situation as he understood it to be and the point from which it is therefore necessary to start a movement towards unity. Man's twofold approach to the world must thus be seen as being a consequence of the Genesis myth as is also Judaism's inherent dualism in understanding the origin of good and evil and in seeing the world in terms of secular and sacred spheres. If to this, I add my discussion in Chapter 7 of the implications of man being made in God's image, we can better understand that man's basic attitudes are not original in the sense that they were part of his make-up as being created by God. They are a consequence then of the "fall of man" after which he is no longer disposed to "see" the world as unity but sees only the two relational possibilities. Between these he will fluctuate without sense of purpose or direction except that found by the exercising of choice in the context of the reality of daily life. Everything that is represented by Judaism's inherent dualism, Buber therefore contains in the primary attitudes of the two locutions representing them.

In section v. below, I will establish my conclusions concerning the problem of evil, but I assert now that Buber's primary attitudes can be understood as theodicy. I have shown that man's indwelling God-image is manifest in social action as an expression of God's attributes. The urgency and importance of this actually happening is understood by Buber as man's responsibility to vindicate such attributes as holiness and justice in respect of the existence of evil. In this sense also it can be argued that Buber built in to his concept of attitude what is meant by man acquiring a knowledge of good and evil. He became able to cognize these opposites which have been established in traditional religious literature in the familiar terms

of light and darkness, order and chaos etc., and which in Buber's language are expressed in the differences existing between the attitude which allows a meeting with the "Thou", and the attitude which confines man to the world of "It".

I conclude then, that Buber's concept of attitude (Stellungen) form a more solid foundation for his dialogical philosophy than has so far been established and that they draw on a variety of sources which have so far not been specified. They lie deeper than a psychological interpretation would suggest; they have the weight of something akin to a Kantian category underwritten by the authority of his reading of Genesis. Also, I suggest that on the basis of my conclusions in section i) above, Buber derived much from Dilthey's notion of "psychic nexus," and "inner connectedness," (Zusammenhang), as a principle which might serve to unify the twofold nature of the attitudes with which he was concerned.

### iii) The Concept of Experience.

I have shown throughout the forgoing chapters that Buber's notion of "experience" is of particular significance. Experience itself, however, is a facet of man's life about which Buber is concerned and against which he offers certain warnings. He says that he is "accustomed to the hell that the misuse of this word experience (Erleben), means" (20). Despite his warnings of the dangers implied by a search for and a trust in experience, I want to question the extent to which Buber's claim to go beyond experience, is valid.

Buber's maintenance of the distinction between Erlebnis, (lived experience), and Erfahrung, (practical knowledge), is important since it endeavours to guard against the problems of subjectivism and to distinguish between levels of experience;

We are told that man experiences his world. What does this mean? Man goes over the surfaces of things and experiences them. He brings back from them some knowledge of their

condition - an experience. But it is not experiences alone that bring the world to man (21).

To understand what Buber means by man experiencing the world, I want to try and establish more specifically what his concept of experience is, and how he applies it. English does not provide the same range of meanings as is available in German. Kaufmann provides an interesting footnote as a comment on the sentence, Der Mensch befährt die Fläche der Dinge und erfährt sie, in which he suggests that erfährt and erfahre, (which Buber has used in the previous paragraph) while being forms of erfahren, are also closely related to fahren and to befahren, meaning to drive or to go over the surface of something (22). This use of language by Buber, itself illustrates the care he exercised in trying to maintain distinctions between different levels of experience. What he is trying to establish is that experience only manages to stay on the surface of things. So far as I am aware Buber never uses the word erlebt (which signifies a more vital experience of something) in the context of his discussions in Ich und Du, except as a practical consequence of the objective terms of reference of the I-It relationship. Further to this, even his use of Erlebnis is confined to those contexts which allow an aesthetic response. Thus in terms of those relationships which Buber considers most significant he uses the term "experience" only to describe the mechanism by which such encounters are made, arguing that what is communicated in the encounter, is not the experience, but the "something" conveyed by means of it (23). Buber further suggests that there is nothing to be gained by a distinction between "inner" and "external" experiences, or between "mysterious" and "manifest" experiences. What experience of any kind achieves is no more than an encounter with the basic world I-It and thus Buber concludes, insofar as this represents the objective world "allowing itself to be experienced", we do not by this means, participate in it; there is no relationship, no mutuality (24).

Friedman in his commentary on this subject affirms Buber's conclusion that in relationship achieved in real meeting, experience is transcended, that is "overcome" (25). However, I suggest that Buber did not entirely succeed in passing beyond Erlebnis to safer, more objective ground. Furthermore, I maintain that there is, in this assertion, a fundamental contradiction to the arguments Buber has presented.

Let me take this latter point first. If a relationship can transcend experience, according to Buber's prescription it can only do so when the "I" encounters the "Thou". That is, when something of the essence of the self has true meeting with something of the essence of the other. (I leave aside, for the moment, the possibility that the whole essence of self can have true meeting with the whole essence of the other.) Buber has assured us, however, that the potential for such meeting is also contained in the objective world of It, that is with the world of nature in the particular manifestations encountered by the I. It does not follow, therefore, that the world of It confines the individual to an "on the surface" experience of something that remains merely passive in the encounter, since Buber has always maintained that a degree of mutuality can be achieved, for examples, with animals, a tree, or a Doric column, (see my discussion in the section following). On the other hand, in the world of Thou, Buber has also acknowledged that there are inter-personal relationships of a necessary and creative kind which cannot by their nature achieve mutuality. We can cite as examples those existing between teacher and pupil, psychologist and patient, and parent and child. What I suggest holds these relationships together is a reciprocity of the service of the one meeting the need of the other. In this context, I submit, "experience" remains as the medium of exchange.

I bring to my argument the fact that Buber himself had serious second thoughts, especially concerning man's relationship with nature.

In his Preface to the 1923 edition of his book On Judaism, Buber undertakes a "fine tuning" of his thinking to that date. We find here that "experience" can be valid, real and authoritative to the degree to which its content is real. Buber's subject here is God, thus an experience (Erlebnis) of God concerns us as event if what that event involves is the "real" God (26). Thus, as early as 1923, and in thoughts developed while he was writing Ich und Du, Buber provides us with a vindication of experience while at the same time maintaining his deep concern as to its dangers. Towards the end of his life Buber refers to this adjustment as "a radical self-correction" (27), and seems to attempt a further correction which places his concept of experience nearer to his original thoughts. He writes, "Erlebnis belongs to the exclusive, individualised psychic sphere; relationship, transcends this sphere from its origins on" (28).

Either this aspect of Buber's philosophy represents a confusion which must remain, or he attempts a fine distinction which I submit does not carry into life as ordinary man "experiences" it. This distinction between experience and relationship, if pressed, becomes a distinguishing feature of the world of I-It and the world of I-Thou respectively, and confirms the duality discussed in the previous section. If I now apply my discussion of attitudes to the matter of experience, we can see that the problem of duality is given another dimension. Buber's twofold attitudes are presented as being a priori and do not reside in experience, nor is the nature of experience itself determined by the attitudes brought to them; what is determined by those attitudes is the way in which experience may be interpreted and accommodated. Consequently, if we bring to experience a twofold attitude, we will not be inclined to receive that experience as offering the potential of realising unity in the world. What I am arguing is the possibility that a change of attitude will lead, not to change in the nature of our experiences, but to a new way of reading



them; thus it is not experience that must be transcended but the twofold character of the attitudes we bring to them. Therefore if we bring to the world an attitude which predisposes us to expect of all our experiences something of the relational quality Buber would require, we will be less inclined to accept the distinctions existing between the world of It and the world of Thou, and we would be less susceptible to the constant oscillation between the two. It is the way Buber would have us go, except for the fact that he disallows the possibility of our achieving a unified experience by insisting, despite his refinements, on the distinctions between different levels of experience outlined above.

What then is it that so concerns Buber about the nature of experience? Buber's understanding of experience derived its direction from a reaction to Dilthey's more psychological interpretation of it. Nevertheless, Dilthey's emphasis on the "lived" character of experience was something which would have appealed to Buber, who placed in this context what can be immediately discerned and accepted as real. In my discussion of this in Chapter 3, I noted, that Buber did not carry into his thinking, Dilthey's distinction between "lived experience", and "inner experience." It is the latter of which Buber is suspicious because of its susceptibility to subjectivism. It would, suggest, have strengthened Buber's position, if he could have made a similar distinction and acknowledged different levels of experience. Even Dilthey's notion of "lived experience" does not entirely satisfy Buber, since he would expect those aspects or kinds of experience which are more outward and objective, to transcend that event which experience is intended to define.

Buber's adjustment of Dilthey is to make the distinction not between kinds of experience, but between experience and life. Buber understands the "experiencing" (Erleben) of life as a form of detached subjectivity. He states that what matters is not this experience but

"life itself." In the same way he makes the distinction between religious experience (which he places in the psychic realm) and religious life, "that is the total life of an individual or of a people, in their actual relationship to God and the world" (29).

I can accept Buber's concern that experience can become a kind of substitute for the real thing, that it can be induced and falsified and that the individual can be obsessed with seeking all manner of experiences, as it were, for their own sake. I cannot accept that the individual's involvement in "life itself" is in any important way different from that individual's experience of life, given that the experience conforms to Buber's own condition of involving the individual with something real, as opposed to something that is a substitute for, or mere reflection of that reality. I reiterate my contention that the distinction Buber endeavours to maintain does not carry over into practice, into that real life in which most people, less refined than himself, are involved.

Furthermore, I believe Buber to be mistaken in confining religious experience to the "psychic sphere," and I suggest that he does this because of his unwillingness to allow that certain other disciplines can make a valid contribution to his enquiry. I considered in my discussion of Dilthey in Chapter 3 and above, the limited curriculum Buber actually brings to bear on his thought, despite the fact that he seems to be so eclectic in his interests. I am suggesting that whatever theme Buber takes up, whether it is Hasidism, Taoism, the Buddhist Upanishads or the Bible, there are certain disciplines which he will not allow to impinge. I have shown that this is particularly true of his attitude to psychology and I suggest that his suspicions in this respect are applied specifically to religious experience; hence his confinement of this to the psychic. Again we can understand the dangers against which Buber warns in the sense that he understands psychology as a discipline which endeavours to "explain away" the

religious in much the same the same way as he criticised Feuerbach's reduction of the religious as being a description of man himself. Further to this, I suggest that Buber has too narrow a view of what constitutes religious experience as such. It is not possible to confine it only to the psychic realm, for religious experience can involve the whole individual, in terms of mind and intellect and of emotions and feeling, as well as in terms of that individuals psychological make-up. The latter may determine the kind of experience to which an individual is susceptible, but the experience itself, is I suggest, more complex than Buber allows; nor does he seem to consider the implications of different individuals having different kinds of religious experience, either as between religious traditions or within them.

I believe Buber's suspicions of experience to be overstated and that the word and the event it represents needs some form of re-instatement. As Buber did not wish to abandon the term "God" despite its familiarity and the misuse to which it had been subjected, so I suggest he should not have abandoned the event of experience simply because there are dangers associated with the way that event functions.

#### iv) Buber's Mystical Orientation.

I showed in Chapter 5, that Buber argued strongly against two aspects of medieval mysticism. The first concerned the mystical tradition that seeks the birth of God in the human soul, which in Buber's language became associated with his concept of the "becoming" God. The second was a denial of those forms of mysticism which call for self and world-denial.

The notion of the individual's realisation of God in terms of God coming to birth in the human soul, was a matter with which Buber was identified throughout his life, despite his efforts to correct and

qualify this assertion. Such qualifications form another aspect of the radical self-correction I have referred to in the discussion above. Buber refers to inexactitudes associated with his statements about God being dependent on man for his "immanence" or "transcendence", and about God emerging out of the individual's striving for unity; he wants also to adjust his idea that "God is not, but that He becomes - either within man or within mankind" (30). Each of these assertions are associated with Buber's earlier study of mysticism and his own mystical orientation. Later he adjusted them to understanding God as a primal being, whose existence and whose presence in this world is not dependent on man, but whose manifestation, that is self-imparting, can be seen in man and in creation. Thus Buber has changed the notion of realisation, from one which understands man as the instrument of God's immanence, to one in which is understood man's partnership with God in preparing the world to receive His reality, and thereby make the world God-real, gottwirklich (31).

What Buber was anxious to disavow was the implication of the reality of God in the world being dependent on a mystical perception which requires the denial of self and world. To recapitulate briefly, there are two basic characteristics of mysticism that can be found within all its various religious expressions; one has to do with an unmediated relationship of God, and the other, which follows from this, is that in such a relationship the individual seeks unity with the divine. I suggest that there are expressions of mysticism which interpret these conditions in relative and variable terms and which are positive in that they are self and world-affirming. Examples can be found in many religions (32), but it should be noted that affirmation of life was a characteristic of the Hasidic mysticism in which Buber was so interested.

I am concerned to establish, therefore, that while Buber renounced the negative aspects of mysticism, a certain mystical orientation

remained in his outlook and is to be found within his dialogical philosophy and his understanding of Judaism; there is, I submit, a remnant of mysticism residing in his central concern, his concept of relationship.

In Ich und Du he sets out clearly that he understands relationship to arise in three specific spheres: i) in our life with nature, ii) in our life with men, and iii) in our life with spiritual beings (33). Where then does Buber place man's relationship with God? I contend that this is not offered by Buber as the fourth sphere of relationship because he wants us to understand that a relationship with God can be achieved through these other relationships and is so achieved whenever the I meets in reality the Thou of the other. This Eternal Thou is thus to be encountered in true relationship with any aspect of His creation. This would suggest a shift from mysticism's first essential characteristic, namely that a relationship with God should be unmediated. However, I suggest that the notion of mysticism is legitimately descriptive of that event in which the individual transcends the physical limits concerned to the point of achieving a true meeting with the divine. I believe that it is in this sense that we can find the first indication of the extent to which Buber retained a mystical orientation, inasmuch as Buber would maintain that in a true encounter within these three spheres, it is God with whom the individual has to do. In understanding what Buber is suggesting, the distinction has to be maintained between pantheism and panentheism. The potential for the individual's encounter with God does not exist because everything is God, but because God is in everything.

I want now to look at each of these three spheres in turn with the intention of heightening a mystical content which I contend exists, at least in vestigial form, and clearly enough to conclude that mysticism remains a feature of Buber's basic dialogical attitude. I shall then follow with a discussion of the implications of this remnant mysticism

for the notion of Buber's existentialism.

Firstly, the relationship with nature: I established that from Hermann Cohen Buber derived the notion that man has to be "put into nature" and in this context I discussed the significance for Buber of Cohen's concept of correlations and its relevance to Buber's understanding of relationship. I concluded in this discussion that Buber used the notion of correlation not in terms of logical necessity but in terms of the ontic demand of relationship. Thus in the context of man's relationship with nature, the individual brings to his encounter an expectancy grounded in his being.

This is a problematic area of Buber's thought and controversial. I have already referred to the possible influence on him of Boehme's vision derived from the contemplation of a dish and Buber's offer of a similar experience based on his view of a Doric pillar. The problem here is compounded by the fact that these objects are man made and inanimate; nevertheless they seem to be able to function as the means or channel for, an encounter with God. I suggest also, that Buber brings to such encounters the expectancy that the event will transcend the physical limits of the encounter itself. But the two most famous examples offered by Buber are those which concern the relationship he experienced with a horse and with a tree. The momentary experience to which Buber thrilled as a child when stroking the horse on his father's farm is recounted, many years later, in language which has a definite mystical character. According to Buber, what happened occurred in the moment when he felt beneath his hand the "life" of the horse;

it was as though the element of vitality itself bordered on my skin, something that was not I, palpably the other, not just another, really the Other itself; it placed itself elementally in the relation of Thou and Thou with me (34).

Buber is not suggesting that the Thou encountered here is necessarily an encounter with the eternal Thou, but that what was

achieved was a relationship of true mutuality between child and horse. That Buber did encounter the "Other itself" is however the link which I believe establishes his retention of the mystical. The link is with a passage in Ich und Du where Buber maintains that in each of the spheres under consideration, at the point of encounter,

we look out toward the fringe of the eternal Thou" and that in each such encounter "we are aware of the breath from the eternal Thou; in each Thou we address the eternal Thou (35).

Here, I submit, is the confirmation of precisely that expectancy which implies a mystical perception. What Buber suggests as having happened when he stroked the horse was not that he encountered God, but that the presence of God was real enough in the encounter as to constitute a mode of divine address.

The well known passage in which Buber describes an encounter with a tree and the different ways and levels of response possible, also testifies to the event of mutuality. What he is anxious to establish is that the tree existed for him beyond an addition of impressions, the play of imagination and the vicissitudes of mood, to the point where it is truly bodied against him and "has to do with" him; the strength of what happened should not be undermined nor meaning denied to the relation established: "relation is mutual" (36). Thus we have confirmed once more the condition which allows the individual involved to find in the event the address of the eternal Thou. I accept that this is not unmediated relationship with the Eternal Thou as a true mysticism would require it to be, and there no suggestion here even of the expectancy of union. Each element in the encounter retains its own identity and in so far as this is relevant for a tree, its own consciousness. As to whether the tree does have consciousness similar to human or animal consciousness, Buber states simply that he cannot say since he has no experience of it (37).

What I am suggesting with respect to the relationship Buber envisages for our life with nature, is simply that in Buber's attitude

to nature there is an expectancy of the possibility of transcending the physical limits of the event itself to the point where the individual is at least addressed by God. Thus there remains a vestigial mysticism and that therefore the relational event that takes place cannot be explained entirely within the existentialist terms of reference in which Buber's thought is usually interpreted.

Secondly, our life with men: The persistence of a mystical aspect within this sphere of inter-personal relationship is, I suggest more apparent. My reasons for asserting this combine discussions already given concerning the relational and dialogical implications of man being made in the image of God and Buber's concept of God as eternal Thou. These combine in what is a familiar and key Buber teaching, that in the individual's encounter with the Thou of the other, there is also an encounter with the Eternal Thou. What I suggest Buber is doing here is modifying those aspects of mysticism with which he does not agree. Let me recapitulate: Certain mystical traditions avow that a meeting with the divine should be unmediated but examples so far considered suggest that it is not unusual for the individual to pass to a mystical experience through nature by way of personal relationship. In such events the consciousness of the subject remains to provide a subsequent testimony of the event itself; union thus does not necessarily imply absorption to the point of the loss of self-identity. It is this latter facet of mysticism Buber is anxious to avoid and it is in the process of guarding against those traditions requiring self-denial and abnegation that he modifies the mystical event. It is in this context that Buber criticises the Buddhist doctrine of absorption" which seeks a total loss of self-identity but acknowledges that the desired loss of self is conditional on a heightened sense both of the self and the other (38). It would appear herefore, that Buber will follow along the path of mysticism to the point where the essential I meets the essential Thou of the other



which is also the Other, but holds back from that intensity of union which implies absorption and the consequent loss of a consciousness.

What happens then, when in Buber's understanding, the I encounters in full mutuality the Thou of the other? Firstly, it is clear that this is both a rare and highly refined event, it is something which in Buber's language has the feel of an ideal potential to be realised. Secondly, such a relationship unequivocally involves a meeting with the eternal Thou. Thirdly, it affords a "glimpse" through to the eternal Thou in the same way as does a true meeting with an object in nature. Fourthly, in such a relationship the individual addresses the eternal Thou (9). While the "other" remains as mediation, I suggest that Buber does not satisfactorily guard against the implication that the encounter will, in its fullest and most ideal form, transcend its own physical limits and that in so doing, there is in terms both of expectancy and experience a vestigial mysticism in the event.

In his late Postscript to Ich und Du Buber writes of the danger of a problematic mysticism blurring the boundaries drawn by rational knowledge, and he states that the I-Thou relationship "has not a mystical nature" (40). It is this assertion that I challenge. I do so on the basis of having argued above that what Buber denies are certain features of traditional forms of mysticism, but that in the process of modifying these, a mystical element remains. What happens in the event of a truly mutual encounter already goes beyond the established boundaries of the rational, and the individual who experiences such mutuality has certainly left behind "the primal norms which determine human thinking about reality" (41). I suggest that as with his anxieties about experience which caused Buber to disallow this facet of real human life, so with his concerns about mysticism. Buber has not satisfactorily established in what specific ways the individual is to live, if not by experience, nor has he satisfactorily argued that mystical experience might not constitute a real event, the content of

which is an encounter with real Being.

Thirdly, our life with spiritual beings: It is not easy to comprehend exactly what Buber means by spiritual beings and in so far as the meaning can be ascertained, such beings are to be understood in similar terms to my discussion of man's relationship with nature. He admits that in this sphere, "the relationship is clouded" but that what is disclosed, is so without the use of speech but nevertheless begets speech. In our relationship with spiritual beings, no Thou is perceived despite the fact that the individual feels addressed and responds fully as an I (42). Towards the end of Ich und Du Buber repeats the passage dealing with the three spheres of man's relationship. He makes the interesting additional comment that from our life with nature we can "lift out" the "physical world", that is the world of consistency; from our life with men, the "psychical" world, that is the world of sensibility; and from our life with spiritual beings the "noetic" world, that is the world of validity (43). By "lifting out" Buber means, removing the sphere from the real world of the present and that by this subtraction something essential is lost, namely its meaning. Thus Buber sets up a contradiction, for I have argued above that in each sphere he would expect the physical limits of encounter to be transcended; here he suggests that the meaning of encounter within each sphere resides in its physical and present context, removal from which deprives that encounter of meaning. I will return to the tension set up by this contradiction below. Here, the noetic aspect of our life with spiritual beings, suggest an essential intellectual content and it is this which addresses man and calls out response.

What then are spiritual beings? It would seem that Buber intends these to represent a specific aspect of our life with the world of nature, namely those objects made by man and especially the products of artistic creation. Man is faced with a spiritual being which

resides in each form "which desires to be made through him into a work" (43). As suggested above, on Buber's own admittance, the issue is "clouded" and I advance no further argument beyond those already offered to suggest that Buber retains a mystical aspect in the relationship here found. A distinction has to be maintained however, between those objects the individual "bodies forth" out of himself, that is, creates himself, and those created by another to which he responds because he "feels" irresistibly that he is addressed. In the case of the latter, Buber claims through their writings to have heard the authentic "lively and impressive I of Socrates", which he understands to be the I of dialogue, and the legitimate and full I of Goethe, which he takes to be the I of "pure intercourse with nature" (44), and in hearing their address by means of their created works, (spiritual being) is able to make the proper and full dialogical response. Thus it would seem that the physical limits of the event in which and through which the encounter takes place, are transcended.

I turn now to the problem Buber's vestigial mysticism poses for his existentialist philosophy. The tension between existentialism and mysticism in the philosophy of religion parallels the history of existentialism itself. I have pointed out in Chapter 5 that Buber seemed to miss the existentialist thrust of Meister Eckhart, for whom the notion of "being" and "nothing" were important features. What Buber missed specifically in Eckhart, was precisely the life-affirming, rather than the life-denying character of mysticism. It is this aspect of the mystical tradition that I am arguing Buber retained. This same tension between existentialism and mysticism is to be found also, for example, in Kierkegaard and Rosenzweig, and more recently in Tillich and Bonhoeffer.

Buber thus stands in the long tradition which endeavoured to reconcile the seeming opposites of the present real world and the search for ultimate being which search is intended to be an

affirmation of human life and the context in which it is lived. I want to suggest however, that the synthesis he achieved is not entirely satisfying. Buber is an existentialist in his present commitment and those aspects of his dialogical philosophy which address our present existence; but as I have argued above, he retained something of a mystical perception in his understanding of all aspects of relationship. The reason why the synthesis is not achieved is, I suggest, because of Buber's own reluctance to accept a mystical orientation at all. The lines drawn between distance and relation in each of the three spheres in which he understands our relationships to be worked out, are too fine. To put this differently, the line drawn between what is a true encounter and how it is achieved is moved, and placed differently depending on the relationship involved. Thus Buber cannot quite acknowledge that a tree has consciousness but does not want to deny this possibility simply because he has no experience of it; thus can he say, that the productions of man's creativity, whether through language as with Goethe, or through the more abstract medium of music as with Bach, that "the ground tone" of his life was fundamentally altered by both. Of Goethe he could speak of mutuality to the point of meeting the eternal Thou; of Bach he is quite unable to explain how he was so affected, but only that he was. The line drawn here, is drawn through the difference between word, which as text represents the physical limit Buber accepts can be transcended, and the abstract forms of sound which while what is achieved in terms of communication is quite clear to Buber, he feels some mystery is thereby retained. I believe it is in fact a line drawn between what Buber can accept as an unequivocal event, and what he believes would require a process of psychologising to explain.

In terms of human relationship the mystical-existentialist tension is clearer, and the line Buber draws threads its way through the varying degrees of mutuality the individual might achieve both in

different relationships, and in the one relationship at different times. This is reasonable, it is something we can understand and which we experience. Whether many people actually realise that degree of mutuality with the Thou of the other to the point of consciously relating to the eternal Thou, is something which must remain a matter of speculation.

In all of these instances the line, however finely drawn, remains and shifts its place and terms of reference. Buber sustains in his writing a denial of mysticism and as such there appears in his thought a lack of consistency which disallows a truly satisfying synthesis between what is, in effect, his twofold attitudes.

#### v) Morality, Obligation and Radical Evil.

In my discussion in Chapter 3 I suggested that Buber had attempted a shift from Kant which gave as the basis of moral action an ontological significance. That is, he was concerned to establish that moral and aesthetic judgements arise out of the fact of being and not conditioned or imposed by an external authority. The shift Buber attempted and which he claimed to have made, was designed to free man from acting out of a sense of obligation; he suggested alternatively that right action would be an inevitable consequence of right relationship and would arise out of the sense of value the I carries to the Thou of the other. Buber, in fact, was challenging Kant's formulation of the categorical imperative, the notion of oughtness, (or obligation, or sense of duty) this implies.

This can be illustrated by considering Buber's attitude to law. I have shown that the reasons for his objection to Law within the Jewish tradition was his inability to accept it as a content of revelation. I suggest, however, that there is a secondary ground for his objection, which is that he understands Law, by its nature and the function it is intended to serve in the community, to be binding and thus imposes on

the individual precisely that weight of obligation from which he wishes man to be free. Buber's attempt to move away from Kant is based on philosophical difference; his objection to law following from this, he understands as a logical consequence of his dialogic thinking.

Kant's imperatives lead him to the conclusion that the essence of morality is derived from the concept of law. Buber places the essence of morality within the dialogical, with the consequence that in broad terms the individual must decide from himself what is right and wrong in each situation as it confronts him, and make his choices accordingly. However, I have also shown that Buber expresses his subscription to universal laws which derive from the notion of love and mutuality in each of the three spheres in which he understands our relationships are worked out. I submit that in a broad sense, (which nevertheless has all time specific and particular applications), Buber's acceptance of a general universal law reflects Kant's first formulation which calls us to act according to a maxim capable of universal application. Furthermore, Buber's sense of the value of the Thou of the other leads him to affirm Kant's second principle of treating the other always as an end and never as a means. I must point out here that my suggestion does not contradict my earlier assertion that Buber's shift from Kant was considerable; what I am arguing is that in his individual way, in making a shift from Kant's basis for a moral philosophy, Buber still carries with him the sense of obligation he claims to have left behind.

Characteristically of an existentialist philosophy, we find in Buber a moral basis that in its application is relative rather than absolute, situational rather than universal. What Buber's dialogic attempts is a resistance to the application of law regardless of case and circumstance, but in making this attempt, I submit that in real terms, in the real event where the individual is faced with choice,

that sense of duty and of "oughtness" remains. So far as I am aware, Buber nowhere argues that man becomes free of the function of conscience, and throughout his work he places a continuous emphasis on the nature of man's responsibility. I submit, if responsibility is rightly understood and rightly applied, it cannot function without the censorship of conscience, and thus the retention of the notion of "oughtness."

It is clear why Buber carries certain anxieties about action derived from the a sense of obligation; he would consider that such a basis for action would distance the individual from the dialogical content and thus the real nature of the event with a consequent impairing of the relationship involved. He assumes that to act out of obligation implies a loss of value in the I's perception of the Thou. I suggest, that in this implication Buber indicates a limitation in his understanding of how the human being functions. I contend that a true perception of the essence of the other as Thou, is a perception of the other's humanity and that to respond in obligation to this perception is no debasement of the relational values of the event: Buber has too limited a view of the notion of "duty." I conclude, therefore, that in this respect Kant is right in recognising the importance of a sense of duty as a basis for morality since the individual can experience as real the urge of obligation.

It might be argued that because of Buber's adoption of the Hasidic teaching of there being no real distinction between the traditional division of the sacred and the secular that the matter of moral imperative is made irrelevant. Instead one endeavours by means of avana to mitigate the difference between yetzer tov and the yetzer ba-ra, the good and evil urges by turning the latter to God. In terms of Buber's concept of unity and of the Jewish yearning for unity this seems an attractive notion, but it does not carry into practice. The problem for Buber is that an imperative remains; he argues that man in

partnership with God, can, by the responsible exercising of choice assist indispensably in the process of redemption. This is man's destiny and although man is free to say either "yes" or "no" to God the making of that choice is incumbent on him. Further to this, there are in the terms of the Covenant, (for example in the basic matter of keeping faith) imperative conditions. I submit, therefore, that in all that has to do in Buber's thought with the responsibility of choice, of manifesting through right action the attributes of God, in man's life with nature and in inter-personal relationships, an undeniable imperative remains. We can understand Buber wanting to shift the basis of moral responsibility from a priori categories to the dialogical. We can further accept that for him the dialogic is the only real context that gives moral responsibility its meaning. Even so, while there is an imperative, there must also be an obligation, a sense of what one "ought" to do, but this being so, right human action is not necessarily diminished either in value or in consequence by having for its impetus mandatory terms of reference.

There is a second aspect of Buber's moral philosophy I wish to consider. In my discussion in the previous chapter of Buber's response to the trial of Eichmann, or more properly, Buber's response to Eichmann, I suggested that the event faced him with a problem far more serious than has thus far been noted. I have explained that Buber was unsuccessful in his attempts to have Eichmann's death penalty commuted and that he was not alone in seeing this as a moral failure of the Israeli state. But it was also a personal failure for Buber, in much the same way as was the rejection by the Zionist Congress, of his resolutions for Arab-Jewish rapprochement.

Out of the specific issues raised by Buber's response to Eichmann, a question arises as to whether Buber's failure is indicative in a general sense of the difficulties of applying Buber's moral principles to real situations. We must keep in mind the context of his concern



for the new generation of German youth and his point that the crimes of the man were beyond punishment. Clemency therefore, would serve the positive and creative purpose of representing, if only symbolically, a new Jewish attitude, towards Germans; it would enable the young Germans to believe in the resurgence of a new humanism.

What Buber faced was radical evil in a form that he may have considered beyond redemption. He can find no terms of reference in his dialogical philosophy which might have transformed Eichmann's diabolical "It-attitude" into a Thou. Further to this, I suggest that Buber could find no answer in Hasidism's principle of all-sanctification. Human resources can only turn the evil urge to the good to the extent that it can comprehend and envisage and since in confrontation with Eichmann, in reality and as symbol, there was no possibility of either happening, the man and the events with which he was identified were beyond the reach of human justice and processes. Buber understood that it was not the heart of man that was susceptible to total separation from God, but the imagination, for only in a corrupted imagination can such crimes be conceived, and only such imagined conceptions can be turned into hideous reality by the nature of the choices an individual might make (45). We can hear an echo of the discussion in section i, on Feuerbach's concept of the function of imagination, that what the human mind cannot conceive is first imagined; it is the imagining that gives birth to the conception and hence to the possibility of the event becoming real. Buber thus argues that only the imagination of man is corruptible and that the greatest excesses of good and evil, the most extreme consequences of the good and evil urges, must be first be imagined.

What I am suggesting is that in his confrontation with Eichmann Buber faced the absolute converse of the ideals he had spent a lifetime trying to understand and communicate. Put simply, Buber's dialogical philosophy encapsulated the potential for the realisation

of absolute good on earth; Eichmann confronted him, both as man and symbol, with the actual event of the realisation of absolute evil encapsulated in one human being who had placed himself beyond dialogue. I suggest that further to this, Buber was himself unsure as to whether his philosophy provided an answer; not to find an answer would be tantamount to admitting evil as an independent energy which would then, of course, undermine the whole of Buber's philosophy and his understanding of Judaism since it would require him to accept a basic dualism.

The issue therefore, sets off the difference between the idealistic nature of the principles of Buber's philosophy and the relative efficacy of their application in practice. In Ich und Du, Buber writes, "Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou", but only the rare and exceptional man can venture to bring himself to that "dreadful point - to love all men" (46). So Buber recognises the relative nature of what is achievable in practice. Buber was able to claim that he did love many men to whom he was opposed but there is a point beyond which love is impossible; this point is marked not as might be supposed by a breakdown in the dialogic of relationship, but at the point where an individual discounts the existence of the dialogical, and the possibility of relationship. Then, opposing energies begin to operate which result in the isolation of individual and communities. Even so, for Buber, this not to be understood as the permanent state or condition of even the most radically evil men or periods of history. Hence his attempt to turn the evil of anti-Semitism into the good of a homeland for Jewish people, and the evil of hard-edged nationalism into an Arab-Jewish rapprochement; and hence also his attempt to turn the evil represented by Eichmann to the good of a new generation of Germans.

The Eichmann event illustrates exactly the relative and situational nature of Buber's moral philosophy. The only response to

crimes of such magnitude is not the annihilation of the perpetrator of those crimes but the use, if only symbolically, of his continued life to turn the stream of evil back to God and so by the good consequent on this, redeem the evil. The issue, however, also illustrates the distance existing between the principles Buber represented and their application to real and specific problems concerning the evil manifested in the life of one individual and nature of what constitutes a "right" response to it by the State.

#### vi) General Observations.

In my introduction I tried to establish the context in which studies of Buber have been undertaken. I suggested that the terms of reference, on the one hand of Guttman who omitted Buber from his Philosophies of Judaism, and on the other hand of Altmann who included Buber in his Essays in Jewish Intellectual History, establish the attitudes brought to bear in a discussion of Buber's philosophy of Judaism. I also suggested that it must be kept in mind that such critics of Buber as Berkovits and Katz wrote from the point of view of concern for the need of new Jewish philosophy.

Any serious study of Buber must take as its starting point the fact that Buber was, himself, wholly committed to Jewish renewal. The question arises, however, whether for Buber, a new Jewish philosophy could constitute a part of, or aid that renewal. I have discussed the idea, that in the history of Judaism, philosophy was relatively late on the scene and only developed in service of a Jewish apologetic in the face of, for example, Hellenism or Neo-platonism. Thus philosophy has aided Judaism in defining doctrinally its identity as against paganism, Christianity and Islam, and in all periods against anti-Semitism, and more recently against the challenges of secularisation, on the one hand, and the establishment of a Jewish state on the other. What philosophy might then contribute are the terms of reference, in

the context of the intellectual climate and needs of each period, in which the essential features of Judaism might be intellectually conceived and communicated, both to Jews and non-Jews alike.

Even amongst orthodox Jews it would be difficult to reach agreement as to what are the essential features of Judaism, and it is perhaps for this reason that there is no authorised Jewish creed. For some, Maimonides's thirteen principles of faith might provide a framework, while others take as a summary of the tenets of their faith, the Shema. The problem of actually defining the Jewish faith in religious terms, is compounded by the need to define the dimensions of Jewish identity which call on other than religious terms of reference. To religious affiliation must be added the vexed issue of biological origin; further to this consideration must be given to the notion of community membership, to ethnic and national affiliations, even to the use of language.

Each Jew, in each generation, must work out his responses to these issues himself. For many the matter of personal identity will not be a problem, since the traditional religious structures and practices, will suffice and have sufficed to meet the most severe challenges. For many other Jews, especially in this century of secularisation and assimilation, the problem of both religious identity and national affiliation have posed serious problems. The specific forms these problems have taken in the period in which Buber lived, have been dealt with in the relevant parts of preceding chapters, and it was in the face of such political, social and religious problems confronting individual Jews and Jewish communities, that Buber attempted his programme of Jewish-renewal. I have shown why he thought the received Jewish religion to have been inadequate, and what were the constituent elements to which he applied his concept of renewal.

Apart from the problem of revelation and law, what formed Buber's programme for renewal, would, I suggest also find its place in the

most orthodox curriculum. Buber asked that Judaism should seek renewal within its very heart, which is a living faith in God. By means of this renewed faith, the individual could then address himself to a consideration of the nature of God, to the question of immanence and transcendence, to the nature of man's relationship with God, to the ideal of soul, to the concept of Torah, of Mitzvah, of sin, repentance and redemption. Buber believed that from such inner spiritual revitalisation, these fundamental aspects of Jewish religious doctrine would be made alive in individual and community life.

Few would question the rightness of Buber's emphasis on a living faith, but the emphasis needs careful pointing in order to see clearly the distinction Buber makes concerning the object of that faith. I have dealt at length with his concerns for Judaism's excessive preoccupation with what constitutes orthopraxy, and the displacement of faith to the point where he believed it had become vested in the traditional observations. Orthopraxy is not necessarily a guarantee of orthodoxy; neither, are guarantees of the essential condition of Buber's programme of renewal which is that faith must constitute an inner living reality. The traditional forms of Judaism which are expressed in both orthopraxy and orthodoxy can only be renewed from within the life of the individual. I have discussed Buber's identification of this living faith as the "third force" which can hold the ground occupied by religion against the kinds of challenges outlined above. Thus this "third force" as living faith is the spiritual energy derived from a true encounter with God.

Buber's philosophy of religion can be read as a highly concentrated form of Judaism's religious vision, presented with the kind of intensity and authority he associates with the prophets. Further to this, the sense of concentration is to be seen in the way in which Buber lays on the individual the responsibility for achieving

both aspects of a dialogical potential. On the one hand, we must encounter the Thou of the other in hope of an encounter the eternal Thou; on the other hand, once we meet the eternal Thou, we are to seek that quality of relationship which will generate the necessary spiritual energy.

The question has to be asked, are Buber's essential ideas too diffuse and too abstract for ordinary people to apply to their normally ordinary lives? I believe Buber makes the matter more difficult than it need be. The way in which Buber effects the concentration discussed above, seems in fact to draw an essential energy out of various aspects of Jewish religion. I have shown that Buber missed, or chose not to use Hasidic joy in the pious observation of mitzvot, and the practice of the principle of lishmah. I am suggesting that Buber failed to give a deserved consideration to the fact that traditional practice can be for some, a Thou to be encountered and thus an event in which the eternal Thou might be encountered. Further more, Buber's sharp focus in dialogical responsibility and its potential, results in a somewhat vague conception, certain crucial aspects of Jewish religion. Thus, I would suggest, that for all its inspirational quality, the ordinary individual would find it hard to understand Buber's concept of God and messianism. Nor would they find it easy to understand and apply the fine distinctions he makes about what is and what is not a valid experience, or valid in experience, both in terms of inter-personal relationship and in terms of a relationship with God.

I have argued in several contexts that Buber's uncompromising idealism makes an application of his dialogical principles difficult. Certainly, there are few who could sustain the levels of intensity required to realise the relationships to which his dialogic points, and I would suggest that achieving them even once, is for most people a rare event which rather than being a way of life, might well be a

climax of their spiritual lives.

Buber takes his stance on the outer boundaries of Jewish religion and Jewish religious life while at the same time being inalienably attached to its centre. He fails to see, in much of what he observed of the Judaism of his day, what in his own parlance he would call a "Thou" to be encountered. Orthodox Judaism, for its part, has not heard in Buber's voice of an irresistible "I" calling it into dialogue. Thus there exists no possibility of mutuality. Reform and Liberal traditions of Judaism have, however, established a more positive relationship with Buber, finding in his dialogical presentation of Jewish faith much of wisdom and inspiration. We find in these responses to Buber an illustration of the same polarity already referred to, in respect of the attitudes of Guttman and Altmann.

While Buber's dialogical philosophy has its roots in Judaism it is capable of being applied to other religions. Buber has not made this application but, as I have noted, many Christian theologians have taken over the principles of his dialogical philosophy to illuminate both inter-personal relationships and the God-relationship within their own traditions.

I suggest that while Buber was committed to Jewish renewal, he was never able to express himself in terms exclusively relevant to that religious tradition. His vision was focused by his Jewish commitment, but not confined to it. The general terms of his dialogical philosophy expressed in the primary-word locutions, take their specific Jewish identity and relevance from aspects of Jewish religious belief Buber brings to bear on them. These aspects of Jewish belief concern, as I have discussed in depth, the implications of man being made in the image of God, man's relationship to nature, and man's partnership with God in the redemption of the world. But the locutions also express in almost idealistic terms the recognition

of the humanity of the other, and the values based on this which are to be brought to inter-personal relationships. Even if the implication for an individual's relationship with God is not read into Buber's dialogical philosophy, the message for human relationships of personal and social responsibility is apparent. It is clear how this would appeal to Protestant traditions of Christianity, even if Buber never intended the application to be made.

In addressing the tension existing between traditional religious beliefs and practices and the need for a personal vitalising faith, Buber points up a problem familiar to most religions. The broader principle of religious renewal based on a living faith as an inner reality, if good for Judaism, is therefore also applicable to Christianity as it is to most other religions. Revelation, as the moving point between Creation and Redemption is also seen as being central to the personal faith of Christians, especially of the Protestant tradition; that God's Word is believed to be available in each hour in which it is needed, constitutes a central aspect of Buber's faith and one that in terms of continuous revelation, he would share with Christians.

These particular aspects of Buber's religious perception are capable of an ecumenical application, and we can find here further reason for the suspicions of Jewish orthodoxy. But they do not at all undermine Buber's rigorous Jewish identity and commitment. Buber is a Jew, not simply because of the nature of his birth and his emergent identity with the community of German-Jews, but because the reality of his own faith binds him to his people as the people of the Covenant.

I suggest that Buber belongs to that tradition of religious scholarship which starts not from a study of religion but from a concern for the problems facing mankind in general. His contemplation of these problems became focused in the individual and thus he placed problematic man at the centre of his philosophical anthropology. Only



later through his work for cultural Zionism did he identify himself specifically with the problems of Jewish individuals and communities, and only later still, after his study of Hasidism, was he able to bring a religious belief to bear on what until then had been simply a religious profession. Further to this, I suggest that despite his anxieties about the role of philosophy as such, it was a philosophical attitude that lead his thinking before it was modified by a religious, (in contradistinction to theological) attitude. Thus Buber's philosophy, once it combined a dialogic addressed to problematic man with a dialogical interpretation of Judaism, emerges as a theodicy. That is Buber addressed himself to a search for meaning in face of the overwhelming problems of human existence.

The basic problem to which Buber addressed himself was what he came to understand as a dualism inherent in Judaism but manifest throughout the world; a dualism derived from the way man is disposed to see the world because of the twofold attitude he brings to his perception of it. I believe that in this respect that Buber's philosophy, while focused in the I-Thou relationship, becomes diffused by attempting to embrace too much within its terms of reference. In one sense this has to do with the discussion above concerning the ecumenical character of his thought, especially in respect of Christianity. But throughout his writing Buber not only makes reference to various traditions of eastern religions, especially Buddhism, but uses them to illustrate, or to work out his own position. This is particularly true of his concern for dualism, unity and the concept of the individual, or the individual's self-perception in this context (47), and I have discussed this from the point of view of Buber's opposition to the doctrine of absorption. What I am suggesting here is that in taking Buddhism as a type of religion which stands at the opposite pole of religious expression to Judaism, Buber confirms the universal implication of the twofold attitude of his

dialogical formula while at the same time not wanting to admit that the gulf between the two traditions was entirely irreconcilable.

I am arguing that Buber has endeavoured to hold all things together within his own terms of reference. Not only are different Jewish traditions to find their focus in his dialogical formula but also traditions of different religions. The result, I suggest, is that we lack a clear picture of the sum of the whole which Buber has tried to present and that for this reason it is hard for the individual to attach himself to that whole. Approaching Buber presents the individual with the need to pick and choose between those aspects of his thought which he finds intelligible and confusing, but more importantly useful or irrelevant to the way in which he lives his life. There are many, for example, who are truly inspired by the concept and the potential for inter-personal relationships offered by Buber's I-Thou locution, while being wholly mystified by that aspect which speaks of a relationship with nature and with the inanimate in particular. The problem is that Buber would not allow us to remain in the realm of the inter-personal only in human terms. Then again, in a specifically Jewish context, many would find inspiration in the synergistic character of Buber's philosophy of religion, but find his call to encounter the eternal Thou through the Thou of the other person too close to the incarnational doctrines of Christianity.

All of the above discussion suggests reasons for the ambivalent place Buber holds within the tradition of Jewish philosophy and the reasons for his appeal to a wider audience. From whatever direction Buber is approached, I submit, that he cannot be properly understood apart from the role that mysticism and Hasidism played in his life. I further suggest, that Buber can and must be read on the assumption that experience does remain as the mediating function between the I and the Thou or the It in any event. Buber was so conscious of the dangers of the categories of both mysticism and experience, that he

failed to give sufficient weight to other grounds existing within his thought which will protect the individual from a self-sufficient mysticism, and the over-emphasis on and exclusive form of individualism which his concept of experience implies. I suggest these other grounds are to be found in his perception of Judaism, in terms of the orthodoxy he gives to, and his interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, and his consequent understanding of Creation, Covenant and the Jewish origin of individual and community, of his reading of Jewish history, all of which call out the individual to be in partnership with God.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 9.

1. Buber, Ich und Du p65.
2. Feuerbach in trying to establish grounds for his materialism and the distinguishing mark of reality, invokes Kant's distinction between 100 dollars (thalers) in thought and in reality. See Principles of the Philosophy of the Future, p39. In so doing, Feuerbach claims that the distinguishing mark is the corroboration of others. It is one example of the remarkably germinal nature of his thought, which here seems to anticipate Wittgenstein's "private-public language" argument. See Philosophical Investigations #269f.
3. Feuerbach, op. cit. p59.
4. Feuerbach, op. cit. p12 and p60 for examples.
5. ibid. p60.
6. ibid. p6.
7. Buber, "Myth in Judaism" On Judaism p95.
8. ibid. p104.
9. Buber, "Myth in Judaism" op. cit. p104. And see, Ich und Du, pp19-20.
10. Buber, Ich und Du, pp18-19.
11. Feuerbach, op. cit. pp58-59.
12. Hodges, H. A., The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey p123.
13. Buber, "The Question to the Single One," Between Man and Man, p40f.
14. Buber, "What is Man?" Between Man and Man p124.
15. Kepnes, op. cit. p82-83.
16. Collingwood, The Idea of History, p172-73. Collingwood develops his discussion of this problem by suggesting that Dilthey confuses psychology and history.
17. See for example, Buber, "Distance and Relation", The Knowledge of Man, p59f.
18. See for example, Buber, "Herut: On Youth and Religion," On Judaism, p172f.
19. Dilthey proceeded on the basis of recognising three basic types of Weltanschauungen: i) positivism, for example of Hobbes, ii) the idealism of freedom, for example Kant and iii) the objective idealism of for example, Hegel. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy op. cit. p405.
20. Buber "Religion und Gegenwart", Fourth Lecture, in Horwitz, Rivka, Buber's Way to I and Thou, p88.

21. Buber, Ich und Du, translated by Walter Kaufmann p55.
22. ibid. Note 4.
23. ibid.
24. ibid. p56.
25. Friedman, Martin Buber's Life and Work, Vol.I. pp319-325.
26. Buber, On Judaism pp7-8.
27. Buber, "Replies to my Critics," The Philosophy of Martin Buber, p712. I do not have an exact date for the compilation of the "Replies", but the book in which they appear was published after Buber's death, in 1967.
28. ibid.
29. Buber, On Judaism, p9.
30. Buber On Judaism, pp6-8.
31. ibid. p9.
32. Examples of life affirming mysticism.
33. Buber, Ich und Du p6.
34. Buber, Meetings, pp26-27.
35. Buber, Ich und Du, p7-8.
36. ibid. p8.
37. ibid.
38. ibid. pp89-94.
39. ibid. p75.
40. ibid. p130.
41. ibid.
42. ibid. p6.
43. ibid. p9
44. ibid. p66
45. Buber, "Imagination and Impulse", Images of Good and Evil, pp35f.
46. Buber, Ich und Du p15.
47. Buber, Ich und Du pp85f.

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